

The Black Cat



SEPTEMBER
1909

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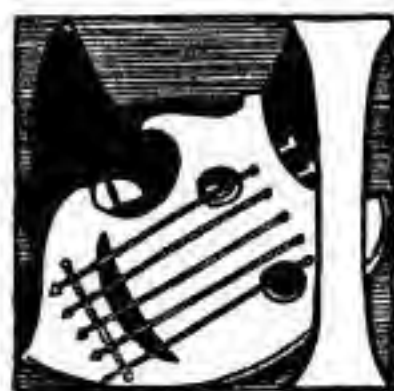
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The Moon Table Boy.*

BY LOUISE OCTAVIAN.



It was in the Gable Room that we found it—our bewildering moon table—our dear, dingy, shaky-legged moon table!

“Take any piece of furniture you fancy from the rooms above,” sweet Aunt Persis had graciously said, and Millicent and I had spent the livelong, dreary September afternoon in a soul-satisfying revel among treasures of Sheraton and Chippendale, and Heppelwhite; and the tinkling five-o’clock tea bell found us still hovering in rapturous indecision around old-time chairs, and tables, and mirrors.

“It’s no use,” wailed Millicent, “I adore this Colonial chair, but my heart yearneth for that beautiful mahogany bureau, and frenzy seizeth me at the thought of leaving this picture mirror,—and as for this glorious oak settle— There, Neville, *do* decide quickly, and let’s hurry down, for your aunt is waiting tea for us.”

Just behind us was a stairway—a narrow, winding stairway—leading up to a low, arched door.

“One moment for a peep into the Gable Room,” said I, and Millicent followed me willingly enough.

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Only a small, scantily furnished room,—a dusty, cobwebby room. Only two or three uninteresting chairs; a cedar-wood chest; an old, old spinnet, with worn and blackened keys; high gable windows, heavily framed in clinging vines; and beneath the largest, the late afternoon sun shining full upon its battered mahogany top, a small table,—crescent-shaped, slender-legged, and exquisitely inlaid with ebony and satin woods.

"A moon table!" gasped I.

"A moon table!" breathed Millicent.

Again the five-o'clock tea bell tinkled faintly far below, and we sped down the winding stairway.

A moon table! Our heart's desire! Our dearest dream!

.

My great-aunt Persis was waiting, very erect and dignified in her carved oak chair; beautifully dressed, as she ever loved to be, in a lacy, white gown; wonderful amethysts in her silvery hair, wonderful amethysts upon her fragile fingers. Close beside her stretched Kiddle-a-wink, the silver Yorkshire, his silky head resting lovingly upon her foot. The tea-table, with its silver lustre service, and its quaint old green-and-white cups, was in readiness.

Aunt Persis greeted us with a benignant smile. "Did you find anything that pleased you, dear children?" she asked.

"The moon table. Oh, the moon table!" we cried in unison.

My great-aunt's fingers trembled ever so slightly as she lifted the teapot. "Owen's table," said she slowly, "my little brother Owen's moon table."

"Can you really part with it?" we ventured breathlessly.

"I should not like it to go out of the family," said Aunt Persis, "but I am willing that any of my dear nephews or nieces should have it; and to you, Neville and Millicent, I will give it with especial pleasure."

"We will put it in the Book Room," said Millicent.

"Assuredly, in the Book Room," I agreed. "Aunt Persis, this is magnificently generous of you!"

"Owen's table," went on Aunt Persis, unheeding our expressions of gratitude and delight. "Pretty little Owen . . . your

little granduncle, Neville . . . He was just ten years old the very day he died . . . If you weary of the table, Neville and Millicent, my dears, you can send it back, remember."

"Weary of the moon table!"—"Aunt Persis!"

"He was a still, old-fashioned child,—my little brother Owen," continued Aunt Persis. "Fond of books and music—very fond of music. . . . He had a sweet, high voice, and his little fingers touched the piano keys so lovingly. He found our grandmother's old spinnet up in some dark attic corner, and dragged it down to the Gable Room. And, oh, the hours and hours he would sit at the moon table making notes! . . . Queer little notes, with such crooked stems, and bulging, out-of-shape heads. . . . There are ink-stains on the mahogany now. I've never washed them off."

"We never will either," promised Millicent.

"And if you weary of the table and wish to send it back to the Gable Room, and select a chair or a mirror, or anything else instead, remember to pack it very carefully. Wrap it up well with burlap, and use plenty of straw."

"Dear Aunt Persis," cried I, "how could we ever wish to exchange your beautiful gift!"

"Why, we've been pining for a moon table for months!" said Millicent.

Aunt Persis smiled,—slowly, inscrutably. She stooped and patted Kiddle-a-wink's silky head. The amethysts on her fingers sparkled and flashed. The amethysts in her hair glistened and gleamed.

"I have given it away five times," she said.

"Given it away five times!"

"Yes, Neville and Millicent."

"And it has been returned!"

"Always returned."

Callers were announced, and the moon table subject was closed. When we started for home the next morning, the table, carefully crated, preceded us to the station.

"I think Fay will like Owen's table," said Aunt Persis to my wife in farewell. And to me in an impressive aside, "Mind you wrap it up carefully when you send it back, Neville. . . .

It was Owen's table, you know, Neville, my little brother Owen's favorite moon table."

.
We gave the moon table the place of honor in the most artistic corner of the Book Room. We dusted it diligently several times a day, we kept bowls of flowers always upon it, and we religiously cherished the ink-stains that commemorated little Owen's musical aspirations. True to my grandaunt's predictions, baby Fay, our three-year-old daughter, liked the table. Oddly enough, it seemed to possess for her a subtle charm, a mysterious allurements, and much of her time was spent in standing beside it, patting it lovingly, caressing the spidery legs, and tracing the inlaid design over and over again with her wee forefinger. If we missed her for a little while, she was always sure to be found in the Book Room, close to the moon table. Often she would walk round and round it, examining it with the gravest attention, and apparently looking for something.

"What is it, baby?" I asked. "What is Fay looking for?"

"Dwawer," said Fay.

"Drawer?"

"Es, dwawer. Baby want dwawer."

"This table has no drawer, my pet," said I.

"Es, dwawer," persisted Fay. "Boy's dwawer."

"What boy's?"

"Moon table boy's."

"Oh, what a nonsense, baby!" I laughed, rumpling her chestnut curls.

"Neville, why do you suppose the table was returned?" asked Millicent abruptly.

"Returned?"

"Yes—to Aunt Persis, you know. Five times she said. I wonder why."

"I cannot conjecture, my love," I replied. "Nor do I care to solve the mystery. It is *ours*—*ours*—*ours*—this adorable moon table, and I can but rejoice in whatsoever mad caprice returned it to the Gable Room those five times. It is a genuine Heppelwhite, and I am entirely satisfied therewith, albeit my daughter doth sigh for a drawer."

Not long after this we heard Fay humming a strange little air. An elusive, minor thing, with a haunting *motif*, and a fascinating rhythm, with just a hint of syncopation. Neither her mother nor I had ever heard it before.

"What are you singing, Fay," I asked.

"Moon table boy song," said she.

"And whom did you hear singing it, O Fayrie mine?"

"Moon table boy," said she, and went on humming.

"It is very strange," said Millicent uneasily.

It certainly was strange. Every day, and almost every hour, she hummed the little air, and sometimes, standing before the moon table, she would fall to tapping the rhythm of the music she hummed.

"She is very musical. Just hear her mark the time!" said Millicent proudly.

"Perhaps she takes after her great-great-uncle Owen," said I.

One windy November night, as I lounged in my den, yawning over a cigar, and a volume of Elizabethan verse, my wife rushed in, precipitated herself upon me, and clutching my shoulder frantically, began to shiver in an alarming and unaccountable manner.

"What is it, child?" I asked apprehensively.

"Singing," said Millicent hoarsely.

"Singing? Where?"

"In the Book Room. I went down after something I left on the hall table, and I heard singing in the Book Room, singing, soft and sweet and dreamy. Oh, Neville, the queer little tune Fay is always humming."

"It was the wind, girlic," said I. "Nothing but the wind. Demons, fiends and furies are in the wind to-night. Hear them shriek! Hear them wail! Horkos, son of the Erinyes, most fearful among the gods of Hell, is leading the chorus! No wonder you heard things."

I went down, to return in a moment with the comforting assurance that the Book Room was quite unoccupied and dismally silent. Millicent was already laughing at her fright. "Of course it was the wind," she agreed. "Neville, did you ever see me such a

goose?" Then she began to shiver again. "Oh, Neville, Neville," she sobbed, "why do you suppose the moon table was returned five times?"

The following night, the preparation of a lecture on Schiller's use of Greek technique kept me at my desk till very late. A heavy rain was falling, the wind still wailed and moaned around the house, and dead sprays of woodbine rattled drearily against the window-panes.

My desk was in a curtained recess at one end of the Book Room, and in the corner diagonally opposite, near the fireplace, and just beside Millicent's old English clock, stood the moon table. I was using but one light this evening, — the green-shaded electric lamp above my desk, — and had partly drawn the Japanese curtain.

Midnight came, and passed, and my work was still unfinished. The rain dripped monotonously upon the veranda-roof, and the woodbine rattled wierdly.

I opened "*Die Braut von Messina*" to verify a quotation.

Tap — tap — tap, went the woodbine.

"'Eherner Füße . . . Rauschen vernehin ich,'" I read. "'Höllischer Schlangen, Zischendes Tönen'" . . . How distractingly that vine did rattle! . . . "'Ich erkenne der Furien'" . . . What was that?

There was singing in the room. Singing — low and dreary. A sweet, familiar strain. Parting the curtain gently I glanced across the dim spaces of the room to the corner faintly illumined by the firelight.

He was sitting upon the moon table — the sweet singer. A frail slip of a boy, in black velvet, with a deep lace collar and silver-buckled shoes. He had dark hair, and hazel eyes — long *spirituelle* eyes — and a very Roman profile. He drummed lightly upon the table with his long, nervous fingers, and sang in a plaintive soprano:

"'Inside my father's close,
(Fly away, O my heart, away!)
Sweet apple-blossom blows
So sweet.'"

It was Fay's haunting, minor melody. The tune she hummed.

The rhythm she tapped. Fay's strange moon table boy song !

"Three king's daughters fair,
(Fly away, O my heart, away !)
They lie below it there,
So sweet."

The old English clock in the corner struck the half hour, and the boy, pausing in his song, regarded the tall time-piece gravely. The strands of the bamboo curtain that I had been holding aside slipped through my fingers with a faint, rustling noise, and when I parted them again the moon table boy had vanished. The fire-light cast ever-changing shadows upon the wall; the rain dripped heavily, heavily, upon the roof, and the woodbine was tapping — tapping — tapping.

"Dear child," said I to the invisible presence I felt might still be lingering in the moon table corner, "your music is sweet indeed, and I like you passing well, but I cannot have my wife fall prey to hysteria, neither can I permit my daughter to hobnob with ghosts, — *ergo*, my charming moon table boy, I find myself compelled to send your favorite article of furniture back to the Gable Room."

So, for the sixth time the lovely Heppelwhite table journeyed back to its donor, carefully packed with plenty of straw, and a lavish supply of burlap, and accompanied by a note telling Aunt Persis that, after all, we found that the oak settle would be more in keeping with our room.

The oak settle, which arrived promptly, with an affectionate note from my grandaunt, was enthusiastically greeted by Millicent, but Fay murmured for the old table, and I, too, missed the valuable antique and rather regretted my hasty decision.

"The finest Heppelwhite that ever I saw," I told myself remorsefully . . . "I was dreaming that night — dreaming over Schiller !"

"Inside my father's close,
(Fly away, O my heart, away !)"

Over and over I seemed to hear the plaintive strain. . . . Had I dreamed it after all ?

.
The New Year found me again at my grandaunt's. No allusion was made to the exchange of furniture. In the Gable Room

I found the moon table. Somehow I was glad to see it there in the cobwebby window-nook once more. Somehow it seemed a very fitting thing that Owen's table should be back in Owen's room.

"Good-bye, beautiful table," I murmured as I turned away. "Good-bye, old Gable Room . . . Good-bye, pretty moon table boy!" . . . And then I tarried yet a moment to brush away a large spider that was crawling slowly across the delicate inlay.

Came a click—came a rattle—and then a scraping sound,—and, lo, before my eyes a tiny drawer sprang open! Somewhere in the ornamentation was concealed a spring which my thrust at the spider had set in motion. Yes, little Fay, there *was* indeed a "dwawer" in the moon table.

In the drawer was a scrap of paper, yellow and torn and soiled. I unfolded it eagerly, yet very gently, lest it crumple beneath my touch. It contained several bars of closely-written music, very evidently the work of an inexperienced composer. Very badly made were the notes, with crooked stems, and blurred and ill-shaped heads. Crazy rests were sprinkled here and there adown the page, and many blots rendered parts of the manuscript illegible. Turning to the spinnet I picked it out laboriously.

Tinkle—tinkle—tinkle—came the hollow, ghostly tones. Faintly—very faintly—in a whispering, spiritlike pianissimo, sounded the plaintive melody, the halting, half-syncopated rhythm of the *moon table boy song*!

On the other side of the paper was written in an uneven, childish hand:

"Inside my father's close,
(Fly away, O my heart, away!)
Sweet apple-blossom blows
So sweet."

.

I put the paper back, closed the secret drawer, and went down to five-o'clock tea. Aunt Persis was waiting, amethysts gleaming in her silvery hair, amethysts glimmering in her lacy gown.

"This was Owen's cup," she told me as she poured my tea. "Pretty little Owen . . . your little granduncle, you know, Neville, my dear. . . . He had black hair, and long, hazel eyes. . . . He looked like the pictures of Julius Cæsar in the old

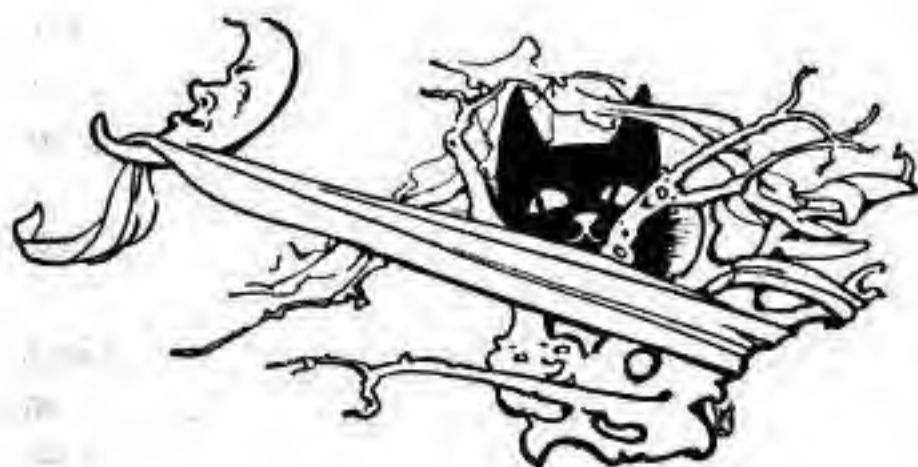
history-book. . . . He could play the spinnet . . . and sing sweetly . . . so sweetly."

Dreamily I stirred my tea in Owen's green-and-white tea-cup.

"Three king's daughters fair,
(Fly away, O my heart, away!)"

I could almost hear the quaint old song! I could almost see the gentle singer!

Yes, I was glad that the moon table was back in the Gable Room.



The Sale of Shakespeare's Ghost.

BY DON MARK LEMON.



ROBERT VAREL could scarcely credit his eyes as they fell upon a unique advertisement, which stood third among those under the heading of "To Let" in the *Morning Star*. It must have been a hundred times, he thought, that he read and re-read the marvellous announcement which some one had heavily scored in the newspaper lying beside his plate in the café where he ate his breakfast.

<div> <div>ton</div> <div>ms.</div> <div>ite</div> <div>um</div> <div>it</div> <div>ma</div> </div>	<div> <div>TO LET</div> <div> <div>LODGING HOUSE, 30 rooms, furnished, centrally located. Box 9, Star Office.</div> <div>CHICKEN RANCH, well stocked, ten acres. Box 47, Star Office.</div> <div>SHAKESPEARE'S GHOST, also Tom Moore's, Box 44, Star Office.</div> <div>PALATIAL COUNTRY RESIDENCE, 15 rooms magnificently furnished, stable, orchard</div> </div> </div>

Shakespeare's ghost to lease! The one thing in all the world that he wanted. Hastily seizing pen and paper, he wrote a communication to Box 44, Star Office. If Shakespeare's ghost could be leased, he would lease it, though it cost him half his fortune. All his life long he had dreamt of being a great poet. This ambition was as the nose on his face—he drew half the breath of his existence through it—and now, like his nose—which was an excellent Roman one—the fulfilment of his ambition seemed within his easy grasp. His father had left him a fortune running into the millions. He had all that wealth could buy. What he wanted was fame.

He could scarcely wait for an answer to his letter of inquiry, but finally it came. It was by word of mouth, and the gentleman who had Shakespeare's ghost to lease was as unique as his

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advertisement. He was an indescribable little being, with very large head and very slight body, and put Robert Varel strongly in mind of one of Wells's inhabitants of the moon.

The stranger came to business at once, offering to lease the ghost of Shakespeare for ten thousand dollars a week, or thirty-five thousand dollars a month.

"But where's the ghost?" queried the young millionaire, looking about.

The other held a portfolio in his hand. He now opened it and placed upon the table a leather-bound blank book and a fountain pen. Then, from an inner pocket of his attire, he drew forth a little oblong case, from which he produced a gold pencil-tip representing the ideal head of Shakespeare. The face was set with two blue-gray stones for eyes, which seemed to Robert Varel to emit a supernatural light.

Placing the tip upon the head of the fountain pen, the ghost-merchant handed the pen to the young millionaire, opened the blank book at the first ruled page, and commanded "Write!"

Robert Varel stared at the pen with its strange gold tip, then at the blank book, then at the little ghost merchant himself.

"Write!" repeated the latter. "The man who holds in his hand that image of Shakespeare controls the spirit of the immortal bard, and, as he writes, the astral spirit of sweet Will guides the pen and indites lines of wonderful verse. Begin on the first ruled line, just at the little black dot."

Obediently, Varel took the pen between his thumb and first finger, smoothed down the blank page, and began to write as directed, or, rather, the ghost of Shakespeare began to write. For no sooner had the pen-point touched the paper than, with some power other than that of the hand which held it, the instrument began to travel across the ruled page.

When the pen had covered a span of about four inches, the poet-aspirant let it fall from his nerveless hand and started back in bewilderment, for there before him, across the white page in linked, unfamiliar script, was the line

A Daniel come to judgment yea a Daniel

The ghost merchant thrust himself forward and read the writing eagerly. "A Daniel come to judgment! Yea, a Daniel! Ah! who but the immortal Shakespeare could have written that?"

"But that line is in 'The Merchant of Venice,'" protested the other. "What good will Shakespeare's ghost do me if it keeps rewriting what is written?"

"That is only by way of proof that Shakespeare's ghost controls the pen," explained the little merchant. "Merely an autograph line of the great bard—he always begins that way. Now, place the pen at the beginning of the next line, just on that second little black dot, and let it glide freely in your hand under control of the ghost, and beyond a doubt we shall get some original lines. Bear in mind, you must always begin in an orderly way at the commencement of a line, for the astral spirit, not being in perfect touch with the physical plane whereon we reside, must, like the blind, be more or less guided in its efforts."

Placing the pen as he was bid, Robert Varel permitted it to move freely in his hand, and as fast almost as a careful man could write, the ghost traced, in the same peculiar script, seven lines of blank verse, which seemed to be not only in the unmistakable style of Shakespeare, but also worthy of that supreme master.

A dozen times the young millionaire re-read these lines, and his heart beat high. At last his dream of dreams was to be realized—he should become not only a great poet, but the greatest of poets. Having in his control the ghost of Shakespeare, he should, to all effect, be Shakespeare himself.

"Ten thousand a week, you say?"

"Only ten thousand, and considering the genius of the bard, my terms are more than generous. Why, sir, in this coming week the ghost may write another Hamlet, and think of the glory which the accredited authorship of such a work will confer upon you."

"Another Hamlet!" cried the poet-aspirant, in a kind of delicious maze.

"Another Hamlet! Or perhaps another King Lear!"

"Ten thousand a week," deliberated the young millionaire. "But supposing the ghost should prove intractable and refuse to write at all, then I shall have my expense for nothing!"

"Certainly, sir. But, I assure you, Shakespeare's ghost is an affable, familiar ghost—a very tractable spirit, indeed—full of the milk of ghostly kindness, and within the coming week may write, as I have said, another immortal tragedy in five acts. However," the little merchant shrugged his shoulders, "if you consider the compensation too high, and are content with a lesser glory, I have here the genius that controls the ghost of Tom Moore, the author of 'Lalla Rookh,' and of innumerable beautiful lyrics, such as 'The Last Rose of Summer' and 'Oft in the Stilly Night.' My terms for this astral are but four thousand a week."

As he ceased, the merchant drew a second case from his pocket and produced therefrom a silver pencil-tip representing the head of Thomas Moore. Affixing this tip to another fountain pen, he handed the pen to Varel. Then, drawing a ruled sheet of writing paper from his portfolio and spreading the sheet out before the young millionaire, he bid the latter place his hand upon the paper in readiness to aid the ghost in inscribing whatsoever verse should inspire that poetic spirit.

Once again doing as he was bid, Varel witnessed the fountain pen tipped with the head of the Irish bard move like a magic wand across the ruled sheet, and leave in its path twelve lines of exquisite verse.

"Ah!" cried the little ghost merchant, "Tom's ghost is in fine fettle today. That song alone ought to be worth four thousand."

The young millionaire stared at the lines, turned the sheet of paper over, and stared at the other side, which was as white and blank as paper can be; stared at the fountain pen with its silver tip, and then said:

"For what sum will you sell both ghosts?"

"Sell!" cried the little merchant, clutching at the table in horror. "Sell the ghost of Shakespeare! Sell the ghost of Tom Moore! Sell!"

The last word was fairly shrieked, and the poet-aspirant retreated in some trepidation; but, recollecting that he had millions back of him, he soon plucked up courage enough to repeat his query.

"Yes; sell! What do you ask for both ghosts—that is, for these images that control the ghosts? I'll give you fifty thousand dollars."

"Fifty thousand dollars! You insult me, sir!"

"A hundred thousand."

"Pish!"

"Two hundred thousand."

"Bosh!"

"Four hundred thousand."

"A mere bagatelle!"

"Six hundred thousand."

"I am deaf, sir, unless you talk in millions."

"One million!"

Shylock himself could not have looked more covetously at a bag of golden ducats than the big-headed little ghost merchant now looked at the leather-bound blank book and the two image-tipped fountain pens lying before him upon the table, and when finally he pushed those appliances of literature towards the young millionaire, it was with a sigh worthy of Hamlet.

"Then they are mine!" cried the poet-aspirant. "Mine! the ghosts of Shakespeare and Tom Moore!"

"My need, but not my will, consents," and again the little merchant sighed.

That afternoon Robert Varel turned over to the ghost merchant United States bonds to the amount of one million dollars, and the ghosts of Shakespeare and Tom Moore passed under the young millionaire's personal control. That same afternoon he settled down to making immortal literature.

The little merchant had given the poet-aspirant two leather-bound blank books and bid him use one for Shakespeare and the other for Tom Moore, and not to change the order of the books, as the ghosts were particular spirits. He also had presented Varel with the two fountain pens before mentioned, and for a week all went well. The ghost of Shakespeare wrote an entire play, an historic-comedy in five acts, entitled "Prince Edward," and the ghost of Tom Moore fairly outdid Tom Moore in the flesh in the number of songs and lyrics that it struck off.

True, the play was not quite equal to "Henry VIII.," nor

For some time the poet and his critics puzzled over the foregoing hieroglyphics, and could make neither head nor tail of them. At last, however, a brilliant idea seized the elder critic, and turning the writing upside down he held it before a mirror and read it off aloud, as follows:

O Isles of Beauty! O Isles of Beauty!
Where youth is immortal and love is eternal.
O for a ship and O for a breeze
To bear me away to thy shores supernal!

O Isles of Beauty! O Isles of Beauty!
The airs of heaven are fanning thy myrtle,
And golden musk is shaken at dusk
From thy roses, warmed by the breast of the turtle.

O Isles of Beauty! O Isles of Beauty!
O to abide on thy beautiful shore!
Where the smile of heaven with the smile of a maiden
Is linked in one smile evermore.

"My God!" cried Varel, "the ghost must have written it standing on his head."

The two critics turned and stared at their young friend.

"You're sick, my boy," sympathized the elder, "that's what is the matter with you. You're sick, and it has turned your brain a bit. Lie down awhile and be quiet."

From the inverted lyric it would have seemed that the brain of the young millionaire was turned indeed; yet that young gentleman refused both to lie down and be quiet, and feverishly turning to a new page in the Tom Moore book, he took up the fountain pen and was in the act of placing his hand in position for astral guidance, when the pen-point became loosened from the fountain-holder and fell upon the ruled page, carrying with it a great blot of ink.

Instantly the pen-point arose of itself and began to travel across the page, writing but three words and then falling prone.

"Look! Look!" cried the younger critic, "it is a spirit writing!"

But his companion was a skeptic, and stepping forward he examined first the leather-bound blank book, then the discharged pen-point. Finally, he turned to the owner of those articles and smiled sardonically.

"A very clever trick, Varel."

"Trick!" gasped the poet-aspirant, still gazing blankly at this latest astral specimen of Moore's melodies:



"Yes,—trick. These blank pages—as of course you must know—have been overwritten with some secret colorless fluid, and whenever a pen of a certain kind of metal is brought into contact with any one of these invisible lines of verse, that pen is drawn along by the magnetic power of the chemical fluid in which the line was originally written, and the pen, being filled with ink, of necessity traces that particular line of verse, so that it becomes visible to the naked eye. This pen travels along these invisible lines as certainly as an electric spark along a copper wire."

"A very pretty explanation!" exclaimed the younger critic. "A new magnetic force! Very pretty, indeed."

"As for the inverted poem," added the elder critic, "that, no doubt, was caused by the page in the book being inverted and reversed."

What Robert Varel himself said was some incoherent reference to a fool and his money.



The Shirt-Maker.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



THE physician spoke bluntly. "You must take a vacation. Get out into the country and do nothing for a few weeks. You have run yourself down with overwork."

"Overwork! Hardly that, doctor. I do not work at all; I read and reflect all day."

The physician's attention was riveted on his patient's haggard face. "Nonsense! You're wearing out, not rusting out."

"As you will, doctor."

Suddenly the physician demanded: "You say you read and reflect all day — what do you do all night?"

"Sleep," was the brief answer.

"Sleep!"

"Yes."

The physician stared incredulously, when the patient leaned forward and spoke rapidly. "I have said I do not work, doctor. That is both true and false. In my waking hours I do nothing in particular. I have a modest but secure income, and I need not lift my hand for a living, but in my sleep no sweatshop slave toils as I do. It begins, it seems, the moment I fall asleep, and all night I am driven without a moment's rest, so that when I awake mornings I am often too tired to get out of bed."

The physician's face had cleared and clouded again during this discovery. "So you work all night in your sleep," he mused. "People don't often do that unless they're overworked daytimes. What kind of work are you engaged at in your sleep?"

"I make cheap shirts." The physician betrayed his astonishment by a start that brought him upright in his chair. "You might call shirt-making a light employment," continued the patient, "and since I rest all day it should not wear me down, but

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I assure you, doctor, I am driven so fiercely at this task that I haven't a moment's rest all night. Then consider the mental strain of the thing. Think of making shirts in your dreams — every night and all night. A man of my tastes and education, making cheap cotton shirts in a sweatshop, month in and month out !”

“Let me get at your meaning clearly.” The physician emphasized his recapitulation with forefinger and palm. “When you fall asleep you dream that you are in a sweatshop making shirts, and in the morning you are as exhausted as if the labor of your dreams had been an actual employment ?”

“Yes.”

“When were you first troubled this way ?”

“About four months ago.”

“It has continued unremittingly ?”

“Yes.”

“Did you ever follow the trade of shirt-making ?”

“No. I studied for the bar, but have never followed any trade or profession.”

“Can you make a shirt while awake ?”

“Yes. About a month ago I found that I could cut and sew a shirt while awake. I have learned the trade in my sleep.”

The physician snapped his fingers thoughtfully. “Are you troubled with sleep-walking ?” he suddenly asked.

“No. Besides, I have tied myself to my bed, so you see I do not get out in my sleep and visit this sweatshop.”

“Are there any lapses in your life that you cannot account for ? What I mean is, Might you not at some time have followed the trade of shirt-making and have forgotten that fact ?”

“No. I can account for my whole life since a child.” The patient extended his left hand. “Last night I cut my finger in my sleep. The pain is still there, but you can see there is no cut or scar.”

The physician examined the hand. “It is very evident that you don't get out of bed in your sleep and make shirts. It is merely a delusion, but yet it appears to be so intense that these imaginary labors drain your vitality as seriously as if you were actually over-worked. A sort of chronic nightmare.”

“Do you think it nothing more serious, doctor ?”

"Not at all, not at all."

"Then how do you account for the fact that making shirts in my sleep has taught me to make them when awake?"

The physician hesitated. "Why, a cheap shirt is not a very complicated piece of work, and your mind has dwelt so much on shirts and shirt-making that you have grasped the essentials of the trade."

The patient inclined his head gravely. "I hope it is no worse."

"It might aid me did I know your views in this matter," observed the physician.

The other did not speak at once, and when he did it was with a curious hesitancy. "My views, I fear, are as strange as my sickness. This nightly labor seems so real, so actual, that I believe—" he broke off suddenly and questioned, "Doctor, do you think it possible that a man's astral body—I mean that part of him which is finer than flesh and blood yet not so fine as spirit—could leave the physical body, toil in a sweatshop all night making shirts, to return to that physical body in the early morning, and when the man awoke he would think it all a dream?"

The physician's face had grown very thoughtful. "Go on," he said.

"If a man's spirit, after he is dead, is able to move tables and chairs, may not his astral body, while he is alive, have the physical power—energy—stamina—or what you will, to cut and make shirts?"

"Yes, yes; go on."

The patient spoke rapidly. "Doctor, I believe that somewhere in this city there is a sweatshop where every night the astrals of one hundred men and women are compelled by some unholy power to toil like slaves in making shirts for a devil Jew!"

The physician shook his head dubiously. "This is flying kites in the regions of speculation," he said.

"I admit, doctor, it sounds a bit queer. But reflect: I have learned to make shirts in my sleep; I have toiled every night for four months at this wretched business; it is all too real for a dream; while every morning I am exhausted from labor done in my sleep."

"Have you ever located this sweatshop—while awake?"

"No. I have attempted to do so, but failed. But New York is a big city, doctor."

"You have found none of these shirts in the cheap department stores?"

"They are of a common kind. I could scarcely recognize them among others such."

"Why don't you impress on your astral to mark them in some way that you could recognize?" suggested the physician, thinking to drive his patient into a corner of absurdity.

Instead of being offended, the patient grasped eagerly at the suggestion. "I will, doctor, I will!" He unbuttoned his vest. "Look, I'll run the thread across here, making a little triangle. Such a thing is never done, and perhaps the Jew may not notice it."

"You would seem to have more need of a detective than a doctor," said the physician.

"Not so. I have come to you for medicine to make me sleep — sleep so soundly that no power can drag my astral from my body. I must have rest or my brain will snap, and some morning they will find me dead in bed."

The physician arose and touched his patient on the shoulder. "Don't talk of death while there is sleep. I will give you a powerful opiate for a few nights and we may break up this business. Meantime, mark the shirts as you have planned, keep your eyes open for the Jew daytimes, and don't worry."

When the patient had taken his leave the physician shook his head thoughtfully. "He does nothing all day, so nature has put him to work in his sleep. Well, let him do a little worth while and he won't have to do much worth nothing."

It was evident that the physician placed no faith in his patient's fears, and when, a week later, he learned that the man had been found dead in bed, with haggard face and toil-worn body, he still considered the case to have been purely pathological.

But shortly afterwards, as the physician stepped into a large department store to escape a sudden shower, his attention was attracted by a counter piled with men's cheap shirts, and pausing a moment and casually examining one, he was shocked to note that the thread had been worked at the tab in the form of a small tri-

angle, such as his patient had decided upon as a possible means of authenticating his sub-conscious labors.

He purchased the garment and, after the most careful inquiry, for the shirt bore no maker's mark, succeeded in locating the sweatshop where it had been manufactured. But here his search abruptly ended. He found a gang of workmen tearing down the fire-charred ruins of the sweatshop, and inquiry at the nearest fire-station elicited the fact that the building had been gutted by flames the same night that his former patient had died in his bed.

"Do you know the cause of the fire?" he asked.

The fireman scratched his chin. "Guess I do! Got a shock myself. The old boss must have been crazy, up there at two A. M., with every machine going with electricity and not a shirt-cutter or a shirt-sewer in sight. We had to turn the hose on him, to run him out of the place. Never saw such a whiskered old viper! But the boys think it's mighty queer he didn't have any insurance on his sweatshop. Must have been making money pretty easy not to take out an insurance in the fire zone."

The physician turned away slowly, meditating the coincidence of the thing.



PRIZE WINNERS

IN

The Black Cat Story Contest

WHICH CLOSED MAY 15, 1908

The Following Prizes were Awarded and Paid :

- ① **Humorous Stories** The \$300 offered for the two best stories was increased to \$600, as four of the stories submitted were deemed best and of equal merit. There was therefore paid to each of the following \$150 :

Dr. A. F. Bonney, Iowa, "The King's Physician"
 Frederick C. Gladden, New York, "The Reduction of Singleton Worth"
 Emmet F. Harte, Missouri, "In the Interest of Science"
 John K. Turner, California, "The Farm of the Unseen Hands"

- ② **Adventure Stories** A single story only of those received was deemed "best," and the same is so exceptionally fine that \$200 instead of \$150 was paid to

C. Stephen Bradd, Massachusetts, for "Nathan"

- ③ **Other Stories** Ten stories, instead of five, were judged best and of equal merit. Instead of dividing \$1,000, the sum was increased to \$1,250, and \$125 was paid for each of the following ten stories. All the writers assented to this decision.

Lieut. Edwin J. Bracken, Wisconsin, "Jacob Schultz, Recruit"
 Jack Browning, Utah, "The Game on the Lonesome Road"
 James Francis Dwyer, New York, "The Peculiar Affair of John Bluggin"
 Mrs. Florence M. Eastland, Washington, "A Hired Gallant"
 B. E. Fox, Massachusetts, "A Random Influence"
 Clifford Howard, California, "A Light in the Desert"
 Frederick F. Moore, California, "The Haunted Pesos."
 Frederick F. Moore, California, "The Taming of 'Mister' McGraw"
 Mrs. Rose Mills Powers, New York, "The Goddess of the Sea"
 Albert W. Tolman, Maine, "The Quest of the Signet"

In addition to the above \$2,050, the sum of \$1,000 was awarded to the following writers whose twenty-two stories, while failing to win prizes, were found available for purchase: Dr. A. F. Bonney, Iowa; Edward Calnon, Michigan; William T. Eldridge, New York; Bradley Gilman, Massachusetts; R. Guthrie Kelly, Illinois; Greig Lapham, Michigan; Walter May, Illinois; Alfred D. Runyon, Colorado; George Saint-Amour, Texas; Robert Sloss, New York; Mrs. Anna H. Southworth, Massachusetts; Mabel Loder Stearns, Massachusetts; Frank H. Sweet, Virginia; Harry Van Demark, Texas; Mark F. Wilcox, Missouri; James Francis Dwyer, New York.

All unavailable manuscripts were returned within sixty days from the closing of the contest.

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The Door of Death.*

BY GEORGE SEIBEL.



HE first hint of the fearful truth came to me a week ago, on the morning after I arrived at this hotel. I turned out of bed and groped toward the window, to open the blinds and let the gold of the morning pour in, when I stumbled against a cuspidor. And my foot, striking the porcelain, gave forth a metallic ring.

It startled me, but I thought no more of it just then. There was a dull pain in my head, and I raised the window, thinking the morning breeze might drive it away. They had told me that the fresh mountain air and the waters of the iron spring would make a new man of me. Ah, they had little thought, doctor and friends, what it would make of me!

I returned to my bedside, and knelt down to reach under it for my shoes. I always put my shoes under the bed, my watch in one shoe and my pocketbook in the other. No burglar would ever think of looking into a pair of shoes for valuables. As I stooped to reach under the bed, my eyes fell upon the place where I had lain. There was the depression made by my body, but it bore no manner of resemblance to the contour of a human body—

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in fact, it looked very much more like the outline of a huge door-key.

I laughed, and said to myself that it was a play of shadows, an optical illusion caused by the beams of the morning sun slanting against the post of my bed. A crazy idea! Whoever heard of a bed-post casting a shadow like a door-key? If the water at the springs the other day had held in solution anything stronger than iron, I should have blamed it on the four glasses I had drunk. However, I determined to dismiss the matter from my mind—my head was drowsily aching without this new worry—so I brushed my hands over the sheets to smooth them out. It would create gossip if the chambermaid saw that the impression left by my body in the bed was not that of a human body at all, but rather resembled the outlines of a huge door-key.

Since then the fearful truth has slowly forced itself upon me, and, O God! I have been driven to every shift and expedient to keep the secret from becoming known. I have walked slowly and tiptoed in the corridors, lest the metallic impact of my feet upon the tiles should arouse suspicion. On the warmest days I have muffled myself in my greatcoat, to prevent spying eyes from wondering about the shape of my body. Despite these precautions the clerk and the porters look after me as I pass, and I am sure they suspect something. I dare not stop to talk to any of the other guests, not even to *her*, for fear my awful secret will become known.

Ah, if they knew — if *she* knew! The thought appals me; I feel the perspiration break out upon my brow; and, as I lift my hand to wipe it away, I feel that my brow is icy as iron.

It is the fault of the mineral spring water — of that I feel certain. The four glasses I drank soon after my arrival must have caused all this trouble. Though I know nothing of medicine, nor of the mysterious inter-actions of matter and mind and chemical reagents, I feel dimly certain that the particles of iron, entering my blood, have worked this transformation. The thought makes me faint — I stagger — I clutch the newel-post, for I must not fall. Meseems that, as I clatter down in the corridor, one of the bell-boys will pick me up and tell the clerk, "Some guest has dropped this." And then the secret would be out.

I can understand the transmutation of my bodily tissue into

metallic molecules. It is similar to the process of ossification by which a well-known museum freak was produced, analogous to the process of petrification by which whole forests have been turned into stone. But why this strange shape? Why not retain my human semblance? What mad prank have the mysterious powers of the mind played with my body? I remember, before lying down on the bed that night, the door-key was the last tangible object of my thoughts. I rose to see whether I had locked the door. Then, as I lay down again, the key, huge and luminous, seemed to hang over my bed. As I fell asleep, its bow seemed to press coldly upon my forehead.

I dread discovery. What will become of me? Perhaps, like the Ossified Man, I shall become the prey of some dime museum manager. I can see the flaring canvas painted with the accursed shape; I can hear the lecturer invite the gaping crowd to "Come in and see the Human Door-key! Only a dime!"

It is in vain to think jestingly of the matter in this strain, as I have tried to do. I have said to myself, "Be grateful you are not turned into an umbrella, for then you would tremble continually in dread of being stolen. Be grateful you are not turned into a Venetian glass vase, for then you would shiver in perpetual apprehension of being broken. Be grateful you are not turned into a pump, for if you met a friend, and he shook your hand vigorously, a stream of clear cold water gushing from your mouth would betray your secret at once."

Indeed, I am sincerely grateful that it is no worse. And grateful, too, that *she* does not suspect. If she knew, she would no longer smile at me, even her mournful smile. What would she say?

And what would the hotel manager say if he knew — especially if he knew the full import of this mysterious transformation? Only yesterday this import dawned fully upon me. It is weird — it is positively uncanny. There is a kind of *escritoire* in my room, and it is locked. I had decided to write the doctor about my queer sensations, especially about the flattened feeling in my head, and I stood before the *escritoire* wondering how I should open it. By some subtle suggestion, coming I know not whence, I was moved to bend my aching head forward and lean it against

the door of the desk. As I did so, my head instantaneously passed into the keyhole, I wrenched about in quick alarm, and the door sprang open.

It seems that the metallic molecules of my strangely shapen body are still in a state of fluxion, and conform at once to the bolts and tumblers of any lock. It is a gruesome thought—*I am a key that opens any door!*

If the police should learn of it! They would apprehend me at once. It would be thought dangerous to leave me at large, for suppose I should avail myself of my weird power and become a burglar! Ho, ye money-bags, what would your double doors and triple locks avail you? Your strong-boxes would open at a twist of my head. I could walk into jewelry stores at night, and help myself to trays of rings and watches. When people would leave on their summer vacations, I could enter their houses and ransack the drawers of desks and bureaus. I could penetrate with ease to the treasure chambers of gold-hoarding kings, or to the harems of uxorious sultans. I certainly could not blame the police for placing me under arrest if they discovered this strange power to be mine. But I do not fear them—prison doors would open to let me out as easily as any door in this hotel would open to let me in.

It seems that the same state of fluxion which prevents the metallic molecules of my body from solidifying in the form of the key, still keeps the people I meet from guessing my dread secret. I am hovering, as it were, between the two shapes—like a disembodied spirit uncertain which form to assume. O God, 'tis well that no one knows! What would *she* say if she came up to look into my eyes, and looked instead through the bow of a key into space?

Can she suspect anything? Is she here by some collusion with the doctor who recommended me to come hither? Sometimes I think so—for she acts strangely. We were affianced, yet she barely notices my presence, nods to me distantly, though pleasantly, seems to avoid me as I avoid her. Last evening, when I followed her up the hotel stairs, my feet clicking clearly upon the tiles, she walked faster until she fairly flew across the upper corridor; then I heard her turn the key in the door of her room. Ah,

if she knew how little avails the locking of doors against me! I need only press my head into the keyhole and give one wrench; the most complicated lock would fly open instantly. What would the Prisoner of Chillon not have given to possess this power? Or Ugolino in the Tower of Famine? Or M. de Beaufort in Mazarin's prison? Or Galileo in the carcer of the Inquisition? Or the thousands that have been cast helpless into the Bastilles and Chateaux d'If of the world? By them this inexplicable transformation, this perplexing gift, would have been welcomed as a blessing, as a divine interposition like in the case of Paul and Silas in the dungeon at Philippi. To me it comes as a cruel curse, an affliction little short of death.

It were easier to bear if I could make the remotest use of it. But what use could I make of it? I am qualified only to become a traveling locksmith or a burglar's first assistant. I should prove a valuable helper to some midnight marauder, for I could tell him that hotel guests occasionally put their valuables into their shoes, which they stand just under the bed, at the foot.

Perhaps I might turn my gift to use in a small way even here. And by doing so I might discover whether the people of the hotel suspect anything. I have seen them look curiously at my shadow as I crossed the lawn. I must keep out of the sunlight.

Approaching the clerk, I said hurriedly, in a casual manner:

"If—I suppose you sometimes do—if you should have occasion to break open any door or to force the lock of a trunk—"

"Sir," said he, and looked at me in a way that told me he divined what I meant to say.

"If you should," I continued, trying to feign a careless smile, "don't burst them open until you've called me." Then I leaned over and whispered into his ear, "I'll open them for you."

He looked after me in a way that left little doubt in my mind. He more than suspects my secret. It will require all my cunning to keep it from him. If it were not for my shadow!

Going up into my room I thought over this, though my head ached and throbbed. Throwing open the curtains, I looked at my shadow upon the wall. If any lingering doubt had remained in my mind as to the horrible truth, one glance now dispelled it. The shadow of my body was truly the shadow of a gigantic key. I

cannot go out any more unless I am muffled up past recognition — at any rate not in the daytime, nor in an unequally lighted room. I remember the story of a certain Peter Schlemihl, who sold his shadow and then wandered over the wide world in despair over his loss — how glad I should be to give my shadow away before it gives me away!

As I watched it upon the wall, flickering and fading with the motion of the wind-stirred curtain, another strange phenomenon arrested my attention. The bow of the key was where my head should have been; the stem of it formed my body; the bridge represented my feet. Now and again a sort of undulation or tremor shook the shadow, and I noted that the bow and the bridge had changed places. It is evidently another result of the state of fluxion in which I realize all the molecules of my body to be, and I suppose it will continue until the process of ferrification is completed. If I had drunk more of the iron water, doubtless by now I should be jingling on somebody's key-ring. I am like the paramecium, that elastic animalcule which projects limbs from its body whenever and wherever it requires them — hands to seize food or feet to kick foes. I am in a state of fluxion, unstable and undulating; I feel all through me the endosmosis and exosmosis of my dual elements — flesh and iron; this flexible, that rigid; the one human-like, the other key-shaped.

The thought is maddening. I would blow out my brains, but for two considerations. One is that a bullet fired at my head would pass harmlessly through the bow of the key, if the bow happened to be head at the time; if the bridge end chanced to be head, the bullet would fall flattened to the floor. The shot would attract attention, arouse suspicion, and suspicion is already rife. Of course, I might go and leap into the lake, being sure of sinking to the bottom, and no one would ever know what had become of me. But there I should lie under water, and rust, rust, rust. The idea is unbearable, for if I cannot help being a door-key, I at least do not wish to be a rusty one.

Besides, if I made an end of myself, what would *she* say? She loved me once — I believe she still loves me — we were affianced. Sometimes I think the doctor has sent her here to watch over me, and that she knows, for I have caught her eyes red as if with weep-

ing. Does she know? I must sound her — yet I must be careful lest she sound me, and discover that I sound like iron.

It must be done with tact. I hear her coming up the stairs now. I will easily cast her off the scent.

“Ah, Eleanor, you may have noticed that — that as I walk along this corridor my footfall clicks like — like metal.”

“Well,” she asked, and looked at me in a startled way.

“It’s just because I have had my shoes soled and heeled with iron. I was afraid the dampness of the ground here, soaking through leather soles, might bring on rheumatism. It’s very damp here — that is also the reason you see me always muffled up in my overcoat.”

“Oh,” she said, and began to edge away toward her door.

“Don’t be afraid of me — stay — I wouldn’t harm you if I could. Of course, the past is past — you believed the slanders of those who would make out that I wasn’t quite right in my head — you believed them, and it’s all over between us. But I love you still.”

“Do not remind me of it,” she said, shading her eyes with her hands, and retreating more rapidly toward her room.

“It is true — I love you still, love you madly. If there is anything I can do to show my love, call upon me to do it. Alas, it is little that lies in my power, but if — if, for instance, you should lose the key of your jewel casket, bring the casket to me. I’ll open it for you — you understand?”

By this time she had reached the door of her room, and stood upon the threshold.

“Good-night!” she said, in a tone almost tearful, and shut the door in my face. I stood in consternation for a moment; I had not dreamed of such an affront, after I had been at great pains to express my devotion. I rapped upon the door and cried:

“Open and hear what I have to say. There was a time when you listened gladly to what I said. Open!”

“Go away,” she cried, “Go to your room — sleep — compose yourself — that will be best for you.”

“You must listen to me, you *must* open the door, or *I will*.” I said this with terrible emphasis, so that she could not help but understand my meaning.

"If, as you say, you love me still, go to your room," she said.

"I love you still," I repeated vehemently, "*and love laughs at locksmiths!* Open the door, or I will. I have a power to open doors more potent than the shoulder of Porthos."

"Go away—go to your room," she almost screamed.

"You suspect, but you do not know the extent of this power," I answered. "If I were Harpagon, no treasure would be secure from me. If I were Paul Pry, no secret could be locked up too tightly. If I were Don Juan, no haughty beauty's chamber door would bar my passion out."

"Go away," she shrieked. "I have rung for the porter. Go away!"

"You shall hear all I have to say," I cried in rage. "Before he comes I'll be at your side, and you must send him off again."

I stooped forward and pressed my head against the keyhole. It passed into the lock instantaneously, and I knew that I need but give one twist for the door to fly open. At that instant the porter came rushing up, in response to her ringing and her frantic cries, and seized me from behind. As I twisted my head in the lock he tugged—tugged like a demon. I felt my senses leaving me—strangulation, darkness, horror succeeded. He tugged and wrenched—I twisted and gasped. It is over—for suddenly I felt all human senses quitting my body, and I fell to the floor with a clang, just a common iron door-key.

I am dead. I, Martin Farrington, am dead—I died at her door. The body that was mine is iron and shapen like a door-key. They have carried it into the room where I was, and laid it upon the bed. When day comes they will see that I am dead. And what is left of me will perhaps be hung upon a nail above the chimney-piece.



The Magic Billiard Ball.*

BY EDMUND SMITH MIDDLETON.



IN the lull of an August afternoon Shaman Tuloc sat within the shaded door-way of his little shop, contemplatively smoking. From time to time a thin brown hand slowly stroked his long gray beard, while his dark, melancholy eyes looked far away into the distance.

Presently a shadow darkened the door-way, as a well-dressed stranger halted uncertainly and gazed curiously within. The old merchant rose courteously and with a wave of his hand extended a silent invitation to enter. Seeing that the stranger still hesitated, Shaman said in a tone devoid of eagerness, "Would the gentleman care to step in? It is not necessary to buy?"

An air of distinction in the old man's bearing, scarcely expected in such surroundings, excited the stranger's interest, and with an appreciative, "Thank you, if you don't mind," he entered.

The merchant noted the young man's eyes as they swept over his wares with half-observant gaze, and saw that his face wore the unsatisfied expression of one who seeks something greatly desired.

"It is not merchandise, the gentleman seeks to-day," said Shaman with kindly interest, continuing to search the other's face with his far-seeing orbs.

"Are you a fortune-teller?" asked the stranger eagerly.

"Not in the ordinary sense, my son," answered the aged merchant solemnly, "but much of the wisdom of the East is mine, and I have known the hearts of many men."

"If you help me," burst impulsively from the other's lips, "you may name your own price."

"I am listening, my son," responded Shaman with dignity, apparently unmoved by these glittering promises.

"My name is Philip Arden," began the young man in quick,

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excited tones, "and I am what people call rich. If my lot had been different, with my own way to make, I should doubtless have become a gambler, as the gaming instinct is strong within me. At times I am consumed with a perfect fever to excel at games involving chance and skill."

"Why do you tell this to me?" demanded the old man.

"You shall see," answered Arden, meeting his glance fairly. "Being wealthy, the gambler's love of gain does not appeal to me. Instead, I have devoted myself to games of skill, playing as an amateur with men of my own class. After making a fad of one game after another, I have settled upon billiards, to which I have devoted myself, heart and soul, for two years."

Just then a soft rustle of silk in the back of the shop, a sudden trembling of swaying curtains, and a quickly caught breath bespoke a listener in those regions. Shaman Tuloc never turned his head, although he heard. Arden was too absorbed in his story to notice. One look at those curtains would have disclosed a pair of peering eyes that shone like midnight.

"Go on," said the merchant, calmly stroking his beard, "There is yet something to tell."

"No lover could have been more devoted to his mistress than I to my favorite game. I wooed her early and late, playing my way up through the ranks at the Club, until last spring I defeated the strongest men and was hailed club champion. But alas! my joy was short lived."

"Your hand lost its cunning?" suggested Shaman Tuloc.

"No, not so. A more subtle hand than mine entered the lists," explained Arden with a touch of bitterness in his tone. "While my laurels were yet fresh, a stranger joined the club, a tall, slender man, with sallow skin and coal-black hair, which parted over a narrow, contracted forehead. His black, beady eyes were set close together over a long hooked nose, and his thin lips were shaded by a scanty black moustache. They say that those ratty weasel-like eyes could look into the shining depths of any jewel and rightly prize its worth. Enough for me that he could play billiards like a fiend. His long slender hands controlled the balls like a magician. He defeated me once, twice, thrice,—each time worse than before,—in a word, ignominiously. Let me van-

quish him! Help me to defeat him!" cried Arden, moved to the depths of his being, "and I will give you what you like."

Shaman Tuloc smoked a while in silence, then rose from his seat and drew a small casket from a secret recess in the rear of the shop. The box was of fragrant sandal-wood, wrapped with cords and sealed in many places. Carefully removing these, he disclosed a small bundle of numerous layers of fine silk, concealing some object within. Very reverently the old man unwrapped the silken folds until there lay uncovered in his palm a small cylinder of ivory of wondrous quality, and without spot or blemish.

"My son, you behold a portion of the tusk of the Sacred Elephant of Siam, the most sacred of the holy herd. He went into the silence at the age of two hundred years and this relic possesses a mighty power. Listen to the words on the scroll. I will interpret." As Shaman Tuloc spoke he lifted from the casket an oriental scroll and reverently held it towards the light.

"To the pure and single of heart," he read in a low voice, "I will grant his wish."

"I will give any price, fulfill any conditions," exclaimed Arden in a choking voice, his whole form trembling.

"Look! What do you see?" the old man suddenly demanded, holding the ivory above his head.

"Only the ivory, nothing more," the young man answered.

"Look again!" cried Shaman Tuloc eagerly, "Look at the centre! What do you see now?"

"I see a delicate pink light shining through the ivory," answered Arden excitedly. "It seems to move and tremble like a rose swaying in the breeze."

"It is the soul of the sacred tusks!" cried Tuloc triumphantly, "the spirit, the life. Therein lies the power."

"What am I to do? Tell me!" demanded the young man.

"Bring from your club the finest ball you have. My hands shall fashion its mate in size and appearance from the sacred tusk. I will entrust the task to no other. In a week's time you shall have a ball, endowed with the living spirit of victory."

That same evening Arden brought from the club the desired model and the next day Shaman Tuloc began his self-imposed task. As he wrought his labor of love, patiently, silently, with reveren-

tial skill, the slender, graceful form of his only daughter glided often through the parted curtains and hung over her father's shoulder with moist eyes and heaving bosom. More than once a rosy blush suffused her modest cheek as she recalled the young stranger's face and trembling voice. Then she murmured a silent prayer for her father's task and for the young man's victory.

On the eighth day the ball was finished, and to the instructed eye seemed to throb visibly with sentient life, as it lay, white and glistening, in the sandal casket.

"Take it, my son," said Shaman Tuloc, committing the box to him. "Let no other hand than thine use this sacred ball. Let no other interest divide your heart. Then victory will attend."

The report that Arden was to play his conqueror again filled the club house. An undefinable feeling was in the air that this game would possess unusual features—that it was a strife for mastery to an unusual degree.

The two men presented a remarkable contrast as they stood in evening dress at the end of the table ready to begin. One was the picture of cold, nervy cunning and calculation, the other, the best type of a gentleman player, brave, generous, skilled, eager for the fray. It was like night matched against day—the powers of darkness arrayed against the powers of light.

To the surprise of his ferret-eyed opponent, Arden, playing with the sacred ball, won the bank. The balls were spotted and the game began. The style of play was fourteen-inch balk line, one shot in. Without effort, by graceful, easy play, Arden rolled off run after run. His ball was absolutely under control and the audience was with him to a man, following his game with frequent applause. But, do what he would, Arden could not shake off his opponent. He answered run with run and invariably finished a point or two in the lead.

Arden, however, never lost confidence for a moment in his ball or the outcome of the game. As the players approached the goal, the 300 mark, almost abreast, but the dark man still in the lead, the excitement grew intense. With only eight to go, the latter ran six and missed on his 299th shot. A hateful scowl showed on his face but changed instantly to a triumphant smile, as he saw that Arden, who stood at 295, was left an impossible shot.

Arden's ball lay tight against the cushions in one corner, the red ball in the same position in the far corner on the same side, and his opponent's ball against the cushion along the rail half way between the other two balls.

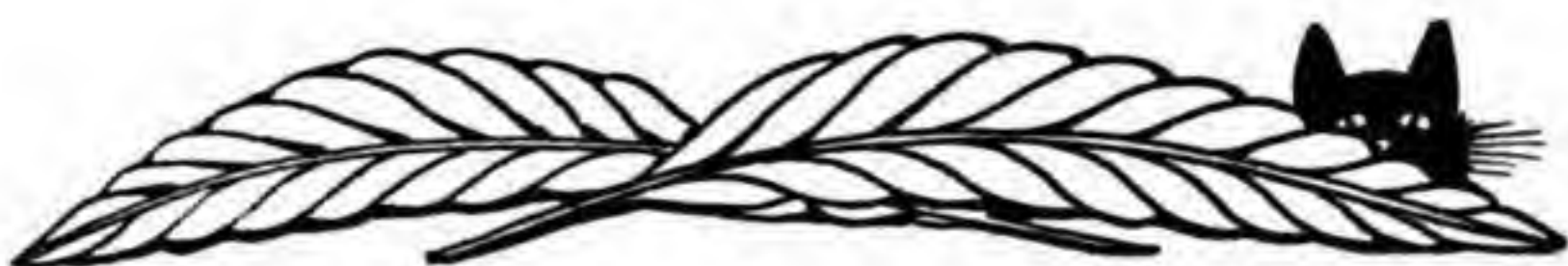
It, indeed, looked to be an impossible shot, but Arden, with unruffled confidence played a *massé*, whose like had never been seen on that or any other table. His ball, with a beautiful curve, spun to the ball half way down the rail, continued its journey in the same marvelously accurate fashion to the red ball, and counted, of course. The house fairly thundered its applause. The result of the shot was to leave the three balls lined up along the centre of the table. A second brilliant *massé* counted 297, and the remaining three shots were clicked off in rapid succession.

As Arden made the last shot, which meant victory for him, he felt his eyes drawn irresistibly across the table to the tier of seats opposite. His gaze rested on a pair of eyes shining with a radiancy he had never seen before. As he felt himself yielding to their power and started towards them, a strange thing happened. With a sudden click the wonderful ball, with which he had played and won, snapped asunder and parted into two pieces. As it fell apart, Arden saw an appearance like a delicate pink flame leave the ball, pass through the air towards the wonderful eyes, then over the head of Shaman Tuloc's beautiful daughter and away.

A minute later Arden was holding her by the hands and gazing at close range into those wondrous orbs. Tuloc hastened to the table and clasped the precious fragments of ivory to his breast.

Later that night, as he stood beside the beautiful Esther in her father's shop, Arden asked, "Why did the ivory ball snap and the pink soul flee away?"

"Because, my son, another love had come into your heart"—and then, as Shaman Tuloc looked on the young people, he raised his hands and said, solemnly, "The God of heaven bless you, my children!"



The Ghost Ship.*

BY C. A. BORDEN.



It was early in the spring of 1907 that a most remarkable experience occurred to me, so remarkable indeed, that I lost no time in narrating it.

Wise men have looked askance at me while I recounted it, and fools have laughed, yet, not daunted, I offer this tale to the world, to ridicule or believe as it will.

Ever since a boy I have been fond of the sea. Its vastness, its strength and even its loneliness have always attracted and fascinated me.

Many were the days I spent on its great, heaving bosom, even before I reached my teens—fishing, sailing or rowing. When quite young I learned to sail, and by the time that I was eighteen I was an expert. I shipped before the mast on a lumber schooner for two years, studied navigation and at twenty-five was first mate on the schooner *Frances Howard* of San Francisco. I have since acted in the capacity of first officer on the passenger steamers plying between San Francisco and Japan, and it was on my return from one of these trips that my story begins.

For two years I had been running back and forth between here and the Orient without missing a voyage, and it was on the home bound run in February of this year that I decided, as I paced the bridge on my night watch, to take a vacation, something that I had not done for twelve years, since I had left my father's roof. So, as soon as we made port and I could leave, I went to the offices of the company and made arrangements to have them put another in my place for the next six months.

I then took a car out to my father's house on Devisidero Street. The old people were delighted to learn that I was to be with

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them for a time, and immediately commenced making plans for my entertainment.

I had been in town for about a week when one day, while down on the water front, I met my old friend, Shirley Keith.

I had known Shirley for years and liked him. He was a genial sort of fellow, with blue eyes and a jovial laugh; a laugh which he always used when greeting a friend, and which made one feel immediately at home with him.

"Well, Jack Kent," he said, as he put forth his hand, "what are you doing ashore? I haven't seen you for a month of Sundays."

"Just loafing," I replied. "I am taking a little vacation after twelve years of the strenuous life."

"Well, you no doubt need it, though you certainly don't appear to. But come on and go to lunch with me somewhere—I'm in a hurry."

I accepted, so he took me to Tait's, where we selected a table near the orchestra.

When we were seated and had given our orders, Keith said:

"You know that I have purchased the schooner yacht, *Morpheus*."

"What, not the 'Ghost Ship'?"

"The same," he said with a laugh, "though I have not been annoyed by any nocturnal visitors since my ownership."

"Of course this ghost business is all bosh," I said. "A ghost is the hallucination of a diseased mind. Still there are some very wise men who believe in the existence of the supernatural, though I for one am not bothered by any such fool superstition, not that I consider myself wise in any sense of the word."

"Well according to her previous owners, very unusual things have occurred aboard the *Morpheus*, but I'm not worried, and in fact only wish that something of the kind would occur to me for a little excitement," he said.

"I may have a chance to see something of the kind, as I am going to take her to Los Angeles the end of the week and spend the summer in southern waters."

"That sounds very nice," I said.

"You had better come with me."

"I should like to, but I have determined to take a vacation ashore, and, besides, I have no stomach for ghosts."

"Rats!" he said, "I can fancy your being afraid of ghosts, and as far as the vacation is concerned, we will be ashore half of the time."

I wanted to go from the very start, and only needed a little persuasion to decide me, so we had not yet finished our noonday repast when I consented.

"Good," said Keith, reaching for my hand, "I knew that you would come around all right, and now we will go down to the boat."

He told me on the way that he had a crew of five men, beside a cook and mate, the latter's name being Hanson.

Keith summoned the launch by whistling through his fingers, and soon a beautifully finished boat, propelled by a two-horse gasoline engine, lay snorting alongside the wharf.

As we approached the yacht I noticed her fine lines and tapering spars, with the sunlight shimmering on her mahogany rails and brass work.

We climbed the companionway and stood upon her white deck. There was a general bustle and stir among her crew, scraping and splicing were going on, and the odor of fresh paint filled the air. I stood in the cockpit, looking forward, and could find no fault nor flaw in her construction.

She measured one hundred and twelve feet over all, with a ninety-five-foot water line. Her twenty-foot beam and high freeboard marked her the weather boat, while her towering masts and graceful lines showed the racer.

Keith watched me as I looked her over and noted the pleased expression on my face.

"So you like her looks, do you, old man?" he asked.

"I should say I do, she is superb."

"Come below," he said, leading the way down the after-companionway.

Below, she was even more attractive than on deck. The main saloon was a beauty, finished in rosewood and magnificently appointed. Forward of the saloon were eight staterooms, bath and galley, and opening off of the galley was the forecastle.

I was immensely pleased with her appearance and said so.

Keith called up the scuttle to the mate, who instantly came below.

The mate was plainly a Norwegian, both by accent and appearance. He was a large man, with strong, kindly face and a decided blond.

"Mr. Hanson, let me introduce you to Mr. Kent, who is going to be with us this summer."

The mate extended his hand and expressed himself very gravely as being glad to know me.

"How are the men getting along?" asked Keith.

"Very well, sir," answered the mate, respectfully. "We will be ready to leave at any time after tonight."

"Good! but I will not want to leave before Saturday at noon. I have some business that I must attend to."

We spent the rest of the afternoon on a tour of inspection and about six o'clock were taken ashore.

It was Thursday when Keith took me aboard and I put in the following day in moving my effects out and laying in a supply of white ducks, etc., which I thought might come in handy in Southern latitudes.

We were to sail Saturday at noon, but Saturday morning Keith came aboard and said that his business would detain him for several days and asked me if I would mind taking the *Morpheus* down to San Pedro for him.

"But what is your reason for not keeping the yacht over until you are ready to go yourself?"

"I want her to be down there next week, as I have made some engagements that I must keep, so if you will sail her down, I will take the train when I have completed my transactions, and arrive as soon as you will."

I gladly consented, and he went ashore, promising to be down Thursday or Friday of the following week.

At twelve o'clock we slipped our moorings and with all lower sails set, tore out of the Golden Gate, propelled by a brisk northeasterly breeze.

It was a cold, dreary sort of day, and the heavy chop outside was being lashed into foam by the wind.

The *Morpheus* leapt over the waves, churning the water into milky whiteness under her bows, and leaving a seething ribbon of white in her wake.

Hanson and myself, who had become good friends by this time, stood chatting behind the man at the wheel until we were clear of the headlands, when I went below for a nap.

I was awakened at four bells for dinner.

After a hearty meal, I lit my pipe and went on deck to find that the wind had risen during the afternoon and that we were bowling along at a good fifteen knots.

Hanson went to get his dinner and I stood watch.

Before he came on deck again, the wind, which had been blowing so steadily, suddenly dropped to a fitful breeze, and at last ceased altogether, leaving the sails flapping idly and the water slopping under our after overhang.

We lay in the trough of the swell, rolling heavily for several hours, and we were still in this position when I turned in.

Everything loose was banging and rattling, the fore boom tore back and forth on the traveller directly over my cabin, the doors slammed and squeaked and the sea swashed alongside with a hollow sough.

But these things didn't bother me, and I quickly fell asleep.

I was soon awake, however, and standing up looking out of my port. The wind had come up again, but from the opposite direction and we were careening wildly to starboard and rushing through the water. I was soon on deck and saw that quite a wind was blowing and was growing steadily worse.

Hanson had called all hands and was giving orders, while the men were running here and there, tightening things down and getting in sail. The foresail and jib were quickly furled, and we rode more steadily under mainsail and staysail. I then went below to finish my sleep and didn't come on deck again until eight bells had struck and Hanson came down.

The wind was still blowing heavily and we were running South-South-West, but not making much time on account of the headseas which were continually piling up before us.

Toward morning the wind was blowing almost a hurricane and all the next day we stood hove to.

Sunday evening it abated somewhat and we again continued our course, out of which we had been blown many miles.

Monday morning the cook told me at breakfast that strange noises during the previous night had alarmed the crew, and that they had heard that the schooner was haunted. I laughed at this and told the mate, who shook his head and smiled.

That day one of the crew came to me himself and said that he had heard peculiar sounds issuing from below the ship. He couldn't explain the sounds except that they were most terrifying.

I asked him what he had been drinking and sent him forward.

That night during my watch below I was aroused by the cook, who came to tell me that the man on watch forward had strangely disappeared, and no trace of him could be found.

The man's name was Christensen.

I went on deck, where Hanson corroborated the statement.

We came to the conclusion that he had fallen overboard, though no one had seen him go, and there were two other men on deck at the time.

Tuesday night another member of the crew went in the same mysterious manner, but this time the mate was watching him. He saw him start violently, give a little cry and grope toward the rail like a blind man. He called to him, but the man gave no heed. He called again, but still the fellow paid no attention, and steadily approached the rail.

Hanson rushed forward, and the man, whose name was Bergstrom, looked over his shoulder at the sound of the mate's feet,—a fearful expression came over his face,—and, with a scream of terror which caused the mate to pause, leaped into the sea.

Hanson hurried to the rail, but the wind was blowing strongly and it was a pitch black night, so he saw no sign of the unfortunate seaman, and by the time that he had run aft, pushed the wheelsman aside and put the schooner into the wind, Bergstrom was several hundred yards astern.

He lowered a boat and sent men out with lanterns, but they came back without Bergstrom, after spending an hour or more rowing back and forth.

When I came on deck a little while later, to relieve the mate, two of the three remaining members of our crew and the cook

stood against the foremast, while the third was at the wheel. I noticed the latter's face, thrown out in strong relief against the black sky by the binnacle light. It wore a strained, frightened expression, and every now and then he glanced over his shoulder at the dark, heaving sea, and seeing me behind him, started, and again fixed his eyes on the compass.

I ordered the men against the foremast to turn in, and stood the forward watch myself, but nothing unusual happened during the rest of the night and Hanson looked relieved when I reported all well at dawn.

I am not easily frightened, yet I must admit that the singular disappearance of two of our crew, in such an unaccountable manner, strangely moved me.

That night I determined to stand watch with the mate, to be on hand if anything out of the ordinary might occur.

Immediately after dinner I lit my pipe and went on deck, where I took up my position behind the forward skylight, a good vantage point from which to watch the man on the forecastle deck.

Everything ran smoothly for several hours, the watches were called and changed, and the wind, which had been blowing steadily all day, still blew us along at a rapid pace. I became sleepy after two hours of watching, with nothing to break the monotony, and at last dozed off.

I had been asleep for perhaps five minutes when I was awakened by a roar from the mate and the sound of running feet behind me. I instantly sprang to my feet and saw the forward lookout groping toward the rail. In two bounds I was upon him.

With a despairing cry the man tried to twist himself from my grasp, and fought with the strength of a tiger to get away, and he would have, had Hanson not seized him from behind and held him in an iron grip.

"What is the matter, man?" I asked, when he had quieted.

"O God! didn't you see it, didn't you see it?" he cried.

"No, see what?"

"I don't know what it was. Something horrible, that made me want to jump overboard to forget it! Looked like a lot of drowned people, all fish-eaten and bloated, beckoning me from the water. God, how it frightened me." His voice fell almost to

a whisper, and he shuddered and cast an apprehensive glance over his shoulder at the remembrance.

We took him below, where I poured him out a glass of spirits to steady his nerves, and where the bright cabin light seemed to comfort him.

The remainder of the night passed peacefully and at six in the morning I turned in.

I was very tired after my all night vigil and soon dropped into a dreamless slumber, from which I did not awaken until three in the afternoon.

When I rolled over and looked at my watch I was surprised at the lateness of the hour and quickly dressed, wondering why I had not been called.

Everything seemed unusually quiet and a strange foreboding of evil stole over me as I mounted the companion-way stairs. This quickly turned into a sort of terror when I saw that **no one** was at the wheel and the deck was absolutely deserted.

I called loudly several times, but the creak of the boom against the mast and the shrill scream of a sea gull, wheeling in flight overhead, were the only answers I received.

I rushed to the forecastle scuttle and peered below. No one was there. I rummaged through every part of the vessel, but not a soul was aboard! What had become of my companions?

With a lonesome feeling I ran on deck, glad to escape the increasing gloom of the cabin.

For the first time I noticed that one of the boats was gone. I scanned the sea far and near with my glasses, but no boat met my gaze—the straight azure line of the horizon stood out boldly against the lighter blue of the sky, unbroken.

With a curse I turned my attention to the compass and saw that the schooner was miles off her course, and I had no idea how long she had been running thus.

There had been no entry in the log for the day, so I worked out my position and found that I was still one hundred and twenty-five miles from my destination, due to the fact that I had been running, evidently most of the day, at right angles to my original course.

Having set the bow once more in the right direction I went

below again to light up and get something to eat, intending to spend the night at the wheel.

When I returned, however, the wind had dropped to almost nothing and at last ceased altogether.

I sat in the cock-pit for awhile, smoking, but at last went to my stateroom to read until the wind should freshen.

I read for several hours and had just laid my book down to look at the barometer when a peculiar sound on deck attracted my attention. I imagined that a man was walking up and down overhead. I listened intently. Yes, there it was again, nearer now and more distinct. I held my breath for a minute. The sound continued—tramp, tramp, up and down, up and down. The man, if man it was, evidently had water in his boots, for at every step I could hear the sough and ooze of water, and at every turn in his beat I heard it pattering on the deck.

In a frenzy of foolish fear and nervous apprehension, I rushed up to see what it was.

But all my fright was for nothing, for no one was there.

A smiling moon lit up a peaceful sea, the shadows rode slowly back and forth across the deck, and the boats swung noiselessly in their davits.

I surveyed the tranquil scene for several minutes and then, with a laugh at my own cowardice, went below to my book.

I had no sooner taken it up, though, than the noise which had previously startled me was resumed—Tramp, tramp, tramp. I started up and listened. The steps ceased for a minute, and I heard a deep groan, followed by a sigh as though from one in agony. Then the steps continued.

My heart was pounding wildly and the cold perspiration stood in heavy beads upon my forehead.

With a superhuman effort, I again went on deck. There was nothing there to cause alarm—everything was the same as before.

Waiting for a few minutes, I went back to my book.

As I neared my door the light in my room was suddenly extinguished and I was left in utter darkness except for the rays of the moon which filtered through the skylight and port-holes and fell in odd-shaped patches on the wall.

At first a dread of the supernatural stole over me and I was

for turning back, but upon reflection decided that a draught had blown my lamp out.

I lit it again and it burned as brightly as ever.

So nervous was I by this time that I locked and bolted my door.

I then attempted to finish the story I was reading, but my mind kept continually reverting to that terrible sound, and I was constantly on the alert for it to begin again.

Suddenly the ring knob of my door dropped with a sharp click, almost causing my heart to stop.

I looked at it intently for a second. Good God! it was turning! So was the bolt knob.

Petrified with fear and astonishment, I lay there for a moment, watching it as it slowly and deliberately turned. Then I sprang for the door. With all my strength, and I am no weakling, I strove to twist it back, I even bent the ring in my hand, but with irresistible force it began to open inward, very slowly. I flung my weight on it and braced myself against the bunk behind me, but to no avail. Slowly it forced me back, and at the same time the lamp was extinguished again.

With a hoarse sob of fear I loosened my grip on the door and let it swing unhampered, slowly inward, while I hurriedly struck a match to light the lamp again. The little point of flame flared up for a second, but immediately went out.

At the same time an icy hand seemed to touch me from behind, and I heard a low, deep moan issuing from the darkness.

In a frenzy of fear I endeavored to run from the gruesome cabin out into the starry night. But some inexplicable, undefinable thing held me at the door, and, strive as I would, I could not pass. I groped back to the bunk.

My foot suddenly came in contact with something on the floor and I tripped and fell flat across it. It seemed to be a big bunch of seaweed and was all wet and slimy.

I hurriedly jumped to my feet, drew away from it, and lit another match. This time it burned long enough for me to see what I had fallen over.

It was seaweed, but was all tangled and gnarled around what appeared to be the fish-eaten and bloated corpse of a man. At the same time the gruesome thing reared itself into a standing po-

sition and moved toward me. The match went out, but by the light of the moon I beheld its terrible and fearsome features as it advanced, peering out of the tangle of yellow kelp at me with its empty sockets.

I shuddered with horror and drew my sheath knife, striking out wildly, but the awful apparition did not stop, though I struck home repeatedly.

My brain reeled, and I fell senseless to the cabin floor.

When I recovered consciousness the sun was streaming in upon me through the skylight.

How I welcomed its warm, generous, yellow light to drive away the awful darkness.

And how glad I was when I went on deck, after my cold breakfast of ham and bread, to hear the water gurgling alongside and find a gentle morning breeze wafting me steadily southward.

At three, that afternoon, I put in behind the breakwater at San Pedro and managed to let go an anchor and get down my headsails alone.

Keith, who had grown anxious about me and had been keeping watch from the veranda of the South Coast Yacht Club, on the bluff, was alongside in a launch almost as soon as the chain had rattled through the hawse pipe.

It certainly felt good to feel his strong hand-clasp and hear his friendly voice.

He told me that the men, terrified at the prospect of spending another night aboard, had overpowered the mate, put him into one of the boats, and slipped away, while I was asleep, and that they had been picked up by a lumber schooner and brought into San Pedro. And thus ended my most terrible experience.

We have since discovered that the mainmast of the *Morpheus* was one which had been in the Norwegian barque *Victory*, when she foundered off the Golden Gate in 1899, carrying all hands to the bottom. Perhaps this is an explanation.

Keith has had a new mast put in, anyway.



The Fire Dutchman.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



He was known as the Fire Dutchman, a nickname that he had justly earned by attending every fire of any consequence that had occurred in the city for a period of ten years. He was a fat little man, who had taken to heart literally the Biblical injunction, Let thy answer be always yea and nay, and no more, only he pronounced it, yah and nine.

But though he was not given to much speech, the little man had a laugh that continually welled up from his heart to his broad felt hat. It was mellow and bubbling, rich and warm, and sweet as a boiling pot of maple syrup. It seemed always sun-up in the little Dutchman's heart, and never sun-down.

Years before, when he first began regularly to attend every fire of any consequence, the firemen and police had sought to move him along as a nuisance, for he would get as close to the flames as flesh and blood dare get, while he invariably brought with him a big brass horn mounted on bicycle wheels, and during the progress of the fire he would blow the horn softly and musically.

But after a time the men grew to liking him about — his music was soothing and cheering by turn, and the superstition got to be accredited that this melody somehow checked the flames, and luck was always with the firemen while the little Fire Dutchman continued to blow on his great horn.

"Yah," he would say; "moosic iss goot to but out der vire mit! Yah? nine?" And then his laugh could be heard bubbling in the notes of the big brass horn.

There were certain minds that speculated about this assertion of the little Dutchman. Perhaps fire could be checked with music. Fire is but one form of energy or activity, and music has power to soothe and quiet. Could the Fire Dutchman be an in-

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ventive genius who was slowly perfecting a new fire extinguisher?

A certain horn was said to have blown down a certain wall in Biblical times — might not the Dutchman's horn blow down a wall of fire?

"Humph!" exclaimed the skeptical. "He is only a crazy Dutchman whose musical bump is excited by heat and flame."

"Perhaps so, and we will dismiss the fire-extinguishing theory," conceded the speculative. "But yet you must have noticed that there are strange notes in his playing. May it not be possible that his horn and not his brain has chords that are excited by fire? For instance, there is the æolian harp, that the wind makes music on: May not his horn be a thing that fire and heat can make music on? He may not blow into the horn at all, but merely seem to, and what we hear may be music made by the heat energy of the fire affecting some delicate instrument concealed in the horn. Heat melody, as it were, or fire translated into song."

"Humph!" again exclaimed the skeptical. "He's got a little sausage factory up at his house, and he may have brains enough to translate man's best friend into sausages, but never fire into song. Take my advice, friend, and buy your gasoline at some other garage."

But whatever the world thought about him, nothing seemed to affect the little Fire Dutchman save fire itself. That baked him brown and browner, till he grew to resemble one of his own smoked sausages. The wonder was he kept so fat, with the moisture toasted out of his body every few days at some fire, but the spring of laughter undefiled in his heart may have had something to do with the matter.

The pitcher that goes too oft to the well is at last broken, and the little Fire Dutchman who ran too often to fires was at last killed. A wall toppled on him and his horn at a great fire one night in a down-town wholesale district, and when they got to him he was quite dead.

They took him up and bore him away in his horn. "The little Fire Dutchman is dead — in a horn!" the burly policemen jested, ashamed to confess their personal grief at the sad accident.

After the funeral, which was attended by every fireman who could get off duty, a gentleman who had taken a deep interest in

the disposal made of the horn called on the widow of the little Fire Dutchman and offered to purchase the sausage shop.

The sum he offered was so considerable that the widow turned the place over to him the following day, and moved her personal belongings into other quarters.

Immediately the gentleman went on a tour of investigation and found that all the machinery used in the making of sausages on the premises was run by electric power. But yet there was no electric plant on the premises, and no wires leading into the house.

Again the gentleman examined the crushed horn that the little Fire Dutchman for a period of ten years had carried to every fire of any consequence that had occurred in the city. Ah! could he rediscover the principle of the delicate, broken mechanism concealed in the horn?

If so, then with capital to back him, a vast fortune was at his command. For here was the means of translating into electric energy the untold heat-power lost every year beyond recovery in the innumerable fires that ravage towns and cities, and which, until the little Fire Dutchman had hit upon his invention, no man had thought of utilizing.



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The Farm of the Unseen Hands.*

BY JOHN KENNETH TURNER.



I was the only rabbit I had seen in an hour and I was determined to dodge along in his wake for a mile, if necessary, to get a shot at him. The only thing that worried me was that he might flatten himself behind a clump of bunch-grass and that I'd never get sight of him again, or that he might make for that field of wild sunflowers to the right and successfully lose himself from me there.

I didn't need that rabbit one bit. If I should kill him and take him back to the farm my hostess wouldn't think of cooking him, and if she should cook him I wouldn't think of eating him. California folks invariably make a wry face when you speak of eating jack-rabbits.

And yet there I was, crawling along the ground on all fours, cautiously poking my head up every few yards to keep track of my quarry, sweating like a coolie, working harder than I would work in days and days back in the city. Ah, well, after all, that's what I'd come to the country for. But how scarce the game was hereabouts, especially for a district where farmhouses were never nearer than a half mile apart!

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Sure enough, B'rer Rabbit, mildly suspicious of the strange animal crawling clumsily among the bunch-grass, ambled leisurely over toward the right and, leaving the pasture, passed under a couple of fences and into the heavy stand of tall sunflowers in the field beyond. I cursed my luck, but scrambled to my feet and followed. Plunging in among the yellow-haired maidens of the weed folk, I threshed about a bit, then suddenly my feet touched fresh earth and I found myself on the edge of a plowed field. That sunflower strip was not more than fifty feet across.

Eagerly I looked about for the long-eared fugitive, but saw him not. In the field, two hundred yards distant, a plow team was at work. At my first glance I noticed nothing peculiar about it. At the second I gasped in amazement. Great Jehoshaphat! The team had no driver!

"A plow team working without a driver—that certainly beats me!" I muttered, after a long stare in which I entirely forgot my rabbit. "When I was a youngster on the farm I prided myself on having the best trained team in the universe. Used to go to sleep on the plow regularly, but I never could have left them and gone off fishing."

As I gazed across the expanse of freshly turned sod, the plow came to a corner. It was a gang plow, drawn by six horses, and the instant the foremost shear cut through to the cross furrow the six halted, the off leader bumped into his mate and, shoving to the left, swung the team about. A quarter of a minute later they were moving in perfect order down the field, the shears as true to the furrow as if I had set them myself!

"Well done!" I exclaimed. "Off leader, you're a wonder. I'd bet my hat you're a retired circus plug who's been educated to the science and art of agriculture in your old age. Say, what a hot grape-vine story that 'ud make for the Sunday Journal!"

As I watched, the six bent forward in their collars, pulling steadily and evenly, their heads bobbing up and down like pump handles, putting as much vim into their task as if a driver were actually behind, urging them forward with whip and voice.

Suddenly I noticed that one of the six was beginning to lag. Then an astonishing thing happened. The lagging animal plunged forward in the harness, as if in terror of a hissing whip-lash. The

next instant a large clod struck and crumbled upon the horse's flank!

Right then I decided that I preferred the other side of that jungle of sunflowers. In one jump I was in the midst of them and in about two more I was over the fence. Then I decided that I was cross-eyed and a fool, that I hadn't seen anything queer at all. Back I went, but this time I was careful to crouch low and stop as soon as I could see between the tall green stalks and into the field beyond. Funny, isn't it, how a man is scared half to death by the mere sight of something he can't explain?

Well, that clod stunt was no dream. I saw it repeated, as plain as the nose on your face, and this time I caught sight of the clod as it flew through the air, hurled, apparently, from a spot alongside the plow. More than that, a minute later I saw the team halt suddenly between corners, then, just as suddenly, pricking up their ears as if at a word of command, the horses started briskly forward again.

Arctic chills playing hide and seek along the hills and hollows of my spine and each particular hair of my head developing a surprising ambition to stand alone, I again hurried back through the sunflower screen, climbed the fence and slunk along beside it. I was in what is known to farmers as a devil's lane, a path scarcely four feet wide dividing the properties of neighbors not neighborly enough to pool interests in the building of a barrier. As I slunk I held a fierce debate with myself as to whether to break and run like all possessed, or to go back, boldly cross the field and see for myself at close range what in blazes was throwing clods at those driverless horses. As a compromise while the debate was raging, I held my gun, full-cocked, at a ready angle and glanced backward over my shoulder at every other step.

It was odd how thick those sunflowers grew along the fence at my left, and how the fringe extended as far as I could see. It was singular, too, how many signs were posted hinting of sudden and dreadful calamity to trespassers. Trespassers! One wouldn't expect to see a stranger strolling this way as often as once a year. The ranch was a lonely one, being set back against a river and nearly surrounded by pasture lands; it was certainly well situated for the long concealment of unusual practices of any sort.

Finally my inordinate curiosity — a characteristic which has caused me to make a fool of myself many a time, but which is a valuable asset in my trade, newspaper work — led me to again brave the weed forest at my left.

I discovered that I had traveled beyond the limits of the plowed lot and was now facing a field sweet with the scent of new-mown hay. Like giant beehives the shocks of hay dotted the field, while in the centre a stack was growing. Afar a hay-wagon, drawn by four horses, was gathering up the hay-cones. I could see no workmen, but supposed that they were on the far side of the wagon.

Soon the loaded wagon swung around and started for the stack, and then I observed that no driver was upon the high seat.

“Great Barnums! More circus horses!” I exclaimed.

But even as I spoke the lines were drawn taut, a whip-stock flourished in the air and a long lash writhed like a snake above the backs of the four. On the instant the team broke into a trot. Was the atmosphere playing me mad pranks? Or had I been suddenly assailed by a strange and bewildering affliction of the eyes?

Executing a neat turn the team slid the wagon-bed snugly against the side of the stack. Then my eyes nearly dropped from their sockets. Two pitch-forks raised themselves on top of the load and, with easy, natural strokes, began tossing the hay on to the stack. On the summit of the stack a third fork was in action, shifting a bit of hay here, spreading a tangle there, building up the stack in another place. Nowhere could I see a human being. The hands that gripped the helms of those nimble forks were invisible to me. I stayed to look no more. Choking in the clutch of a nameless terror, I stampeded through the sunflowers, crossed the devil's lane into the pasture and tore madly in the direction of the farm at which I boarded.

I ran crazily as long as my breath would let me and then I stopped. My boarding place was still a mile away. Moreover, I would make myself ridiculous by dashing breathless and wild-eyed into the presence of the farmer and his family. It was very likely that I had gone insane — that my much needed respite from the demands of newspaper life had come too late — yet if I must

go to the asylum I wanted to do it quietly, without sensational scare-heads, without the mortification of making the trip in handcuffs chained to some country constable. Flushed and panting, I sat down on a grassy knoll, taking care, however, to face the source of my flight.

Then I remembered.

"It's the Cobb ranch!" I exclaimed. "Why didn't I think of that before?"

My host had casually mentioned the place to me as I started out with my gun on my shoulder.

"Better not stray on to the Cobb ranch," he had remarked. "Somebody might take a shot at you if you do. It's a couple o' miles down the river and you'll know it by the fringe of sun-flowers and the 'keep out' signs on the posts. That's one ranch everybody hereabouts has learned to fight shy of."

When I reached the home of my host I said nothing of the startling things I had seen that day—or thought I had seen—but after supper I unconcernedly questioned my host about the mysterious farm and its owner. I learned that the Cobbs, a middle-aged couple, had moved in from nobody knew where some seven years previously. They had bought the most isolated farm in that section of the county, a place of four hundred acres, but had been able to pay only a small fraction of the purchase price. Neighbors had freely predicted that the place would revert to the former owner, but, to their surprise, the entire debt had been settled in four years' time. The Cobbs had prospered wonderfully. They had purchased another one hundred acres of land adjoining their own and were now negotiating for another two hundred acres.

Since their advent, I learned, the Cobbs had never visited or willingly received a visitor. Persons who had, for one reason or another, wished to call on them, had found a padlock on the outside gate. On essaying to enter despite this, they had been summarily ordered away and told that they might entrust their business to a letter or arrange for a personal interview with the proprietor in the neighboring town. Even the county assessor was not allowed to enter that gate without having first apprised Cyrus Cobb by mail of the date of his coming.

The most enigmatical fact of all about the Cobbs, however, was their mysterious method of operating their place. It was admitted to be a physical impossibility for one man to work the farm alone, and yet in all the seven years of their residence the Cobbs had not been known to hire or discharge a farm-hand. If they employed any hands at all, nobody had ever had so much as a glimpse of them. Daily, Cyrus Cobb drove to a near-by skimming station with the milk of a score of cows. Several times a year he herded a band of hogs to market or sold a few hundred chickens. He raised hay, wheat and barley. Yet when people met him on the road or in town they noticed that he never looked worried or overworked. They wondered dully how he got his work done. Sometimes they speculated half humorously among themselves, but they never investigated. After their first friendly advances had been rebuffed they left Cyrus Cobb and his ranch severely alone. Evidently none of them had seen what I myself had seen that day, else the countryside would have rung with the story.

After catechising my landlord I decided that, after all, I had been afflicted with no illusion of the sight or aberration of the brain. I was convinced that I had run upon a mystery unparalleled in any of my excursions into either fact or fiction.

I had delved almost not at all in the realm of ghosts, apparitions and such, and took no stock in them. Only once, I remembered, some ten years previous, had I attended a spiritualistic seance, and that time, though all the other attendants at the affair had expressed a strong conviction of the genuineness of the phenomena, I had merely laughed within myself and said: "How easy! Give me a phonograph trumpet, a cabinet, a bed-sheet, an old guitar and some preparation that will make that lamp burst into flame when I turn up the wick, and I can duplicate the performance myself without a single rehearsal."

But in my newspaper account of the seance I had not said these things. I had told just what I had seen, what I had heard, and let the reader draw his own conclusions. That the reader had chosen to take my story as an evidence of the reality of spirit materialization was no fault of mine.

A bitter quarrel between rival mediums culminating in mutual accusations of trickery and public denunciations was what had

given rise to my little newspaper investigation. Hiram Canby, the medium whose flirtation with the denizens of another world I had written up, had looked upon my "story" as a complete vindication of himself. He had thanked me profusely for my "fairness" and had wished me all sorts of fine luck in the future, promising me the good offices of all the spectres at his command.

Canby was a tall, gaunt, hump-shouldered fellow, with the features of a Turk and a hairless face spotted like the sides of a leopard. He lacked eyebrows, his bald head was covered with a thick, curly black wig, and his large, dark eyes glowed from the depths of their cavernous sockets like a wolf's eyes shining from the bottom of his den. At the time I knew him, Canby's spook business was only a side line, the chief support for himself and wife being a small second-hand store which he dubbed "The Old Curiosity Shop." His favorite "control" was a shade known as Oklahoma Jones, famed in the little city for his quick knock-outs of over-inquisitive persons, for more than one rash young man had suffered a broken head while striking a match at a seance or otherwise trying to test for himself the reality of Canby's trumpet-whispering sprites.

Despite several hours of midnight pondering, I arose with my mind as far as ever from a solution of the Cobb ranch mystery. However, the night had brought me one conclusion — that I would make a desperate attempt to penetrate the puzzle and to run to earth the secret of the unseen hands.

The middle of the afternoon saw me, with my gun on my shoulder, threading the fields in the direction of the farm of Cyrus Cobb. The day was perfect, clear and warm, vibrant with the vital essences of spring. But to me the very tranquility of the afternoon seemed to hold a sinister meaning, the warm sunshine to be charged with menace. As I came in sight of the fringe of nodding sunflowers, the terror of things unaccountable built an iceberg around my heart.

To relieve my depression I started to whistle a lively tune, but the sound died on my lips. I could not whistle. Bolstering my courage with a sickly grin, I crossed the devil's lane and slipped stealthily through the jungle of sunflowers.

The same plow and team were at work as on the day previous.

The patch of unturned earth was almost gone now. Driverless still, the six horses were making the difficult turns in perfect order and with admirable dispatch.

A rod behind the plow followed a shepherd dog, walking lazily in the furrow, his head and tail down. Suddenly he pricked up his ears and the next moment was off across the freshly turned earth. The attraction, a cotton-tail rabbit, was quickly overhauled. Seizing him by the back, the dog shook him violently until he ceased to struggle. Wagging his tail as if in anticipation of the praise of a master, the dog bore his prize back to the plow, and — even now I could hardly believe my eyes — I saw the rabbit detach itself from the jaws of the dog and drop into the plow-box!

A few minutes later I watched the turning of the last furrow and the unhitching of the team. The horses simply halted, the state-chains dropped from the double-trees, then the team moved on toward the farm buildings in the distance.

I resolved to get closer to those farm buildings myself. They were a half mile distant. Immediately to their left I observed a straggling grove of trees. This was my chance.

Following the fence until the grove was between myself and the collection of buildings, I crept through a field of ripening grain to the shelter of the trees. Even here I took no chances, but glided from one trunk to another until I found myself close upon a corral.

The corral was full of cows, gathered, I rightly divined, for the evening milking. Of a sudden my shifting glance became fixed and my knees wobbled under me. Suspended in the air beneath the bulging udder of a bossy I saw an ordinary milk-pail, while tilted at a familiar angle on the ground beside her right hind leg was a milking-stool. Into the pail the white fluid was streaming in geyser-like jets. I watched the operation, fascinated. More and more meager became the squirts of milk. At last they ceased. I saw the pail withdrawn and the stool topple over. Picking its way among the cows, the pail floated through a little gate — which opened and shut for it — and, tipping, poured its contents into a large can which stood on a near-by table. The pail, swinging in buoyant emptiness, returned to the corral. It hesitated above the stool and the latter leaped up in the air beside it.

Pail and stool together then singled out a second cow and proceeded to milk her as they had milked her neighbor.

I stole along the border of the wood, but stopped with thundering pulses. In the shade of a tree a middle-aged woman reclined in an easy chair, peacefully finishing an afternoon nap. Here at last was flesh and blood, I thought. But, as I looked, a fan waved slowly backward and forward before the sleeping face!

Presently the woman awoke, rose and moved toward the house. Behind her followed chair and fan, floating through the air at her back.

Lurking at the edge of the wood, I watched the completion of the evening chores. A sack of wheat cleanings emerged from a granary, floated through the air to the chicken yard, where it tipped its ears downward and spilled its contents over the ground. Leaving the greedy fowls to cluck and cackle over their supper, the empty sack hung itself on a near-by fence. More sacks emerged from the granary door and were wafted to the hog lot, where they dumped themselves in troughs and over the backs of the struggling, squealing porkers. Joining the procession, a large can of skimmed milk also poured its contents into the troughs.

The corral gate swung open and the cows filed into the pasture. The hand pump creaked merrily and the troughs filled with water. The stable door opened, and horses, following their tugging halter ropes, went to water and back again. A hay-wagon came in from the field, the chains dropped from the double-trees, the neck-yoke thudded to the ground, and the team disappeared inside the barn. An ax swung lustily at the woodpile and armfuls of wood floated through the air and into the house.

As twilight laid its melancholy shroud upon the farm, I smelled the odor of cooking food and, with both barrels of my gun cocked and ready for I knew not what, I crept stealthily toward the house.

Through a garden gate I glided, along an arbor walk and up to the side of the silent walls. Beneath an open window I halted and, as I raised my eyes above the sash, I heard voices.

"Yes, I've promised the hands a night off," a masculine voice was saying, in a high-pitched, nasal drawl. "They've been beg-

ging for it for a long time, and, as they've been mighty faithful, I just thought I'd give it to them."

That voice! I had heard it before, sometime, somewhere. The hands! I'd just like to get a look at some of those hands.

I peeped through the window. The room was dark, but a light streamed through an open door on its opposite side. Evidently the speaker was in the farther room. I could see no one, but in a moment a dish floated across the open doorway. The Cobbs were at supper.

Shifting my position to another window, I found that I could command a better view of the second room. Seated at a table, in the act of transferring a forkful of food to his mouth, I beheld the figure of a man. The face was devoid of hair, thin, gaunt and aquiline. The lips were compressed, the eyebrows absent, the skull hidden by a profusion of curly black hair, strangely inconsistent with the rest of the make-up. As the man lifted his voice a second time all doubt was dispelled. Cyrus Cobb was my old acquaintance, Hiram Canby!

A noise at the gate caused me to turn hastily. Gliding along the arbor walk came a white shadow. Its size, shape and density I could not guess in that moment of awful horror. As I feebly fumbled at the triggers of my gun a huge club was brandished above my head. I tried to dodge, I tried to cry out, but the thing struck me a crushing blow and I felt myself drowning in a sea of inky blackness.

When I regained consciousness I was lying between the white sheets of a soft bed. It was day, and my first sensations were a throbbing of the head and a faintness at the stomach. I sat up, wonderingly, and as I did so I heard a door open at my back.

"Pulling yourself together, eh?" drawled a high-pitched, nasal voice. "I thought 'twas about time."

Turning my head, I looked into the deep-set eyes of Hiram Canby. He was holding out a hand.

"Spying on me, eh?" he continued, pleasantly, as I took the bony member. "I s'pose now you'll be writing me up in the papers."

I grinned sheepishly.

"Well, I won't mind it, now the scheme's proved a success,"

he said, easily, drawing up a chair and motioning me to stay where I was; "but, young fellow, if you hadn't done me a good turn once it 'ud been all off with you last night. Okey was just about to finish you when he recognized your face and called me out."

"Okey?" I interrogated, with a puzzled frown, raising a hand to my bruised head.

"Oklahoma Jones, my foreman—you remember him back in Harney," reminded Canby.

"Sure I remember him," I jerked out, "but your foreman—I don't understand. You don't mean to tell me that you're working this ranch with the shades of the departed?"

"You've hit it," cackled Canby, gleefully slapping a lanky knee, "though I wouldn't have told you if I hadn't thought you'd already guessed it. This is the original ghost ranch, the first and only farm of the unseen hands. When it comes to turning out profits on the investment, flesh and blood at thirty dollars a month isn't in it for a minute, while improved machinery is skinned a thousand miles. Nothing for wages; nothing for clothes; nothing for grub; nothing for——"

"But how did you do it?" I broke in, breathlessly. In heaven's name how did you ever come to do it?"

"I was just telling you," explained Canby. "I was just going to say that I reasoned it all out back there in Harney eight or nine years ago. If a man can make spirits rap on the walls, pack messages back and forth, tip tables and otherwise juggle with the furniture, as well as trounce disturbers of a seance, what's the matter with having them perform labor of a useful sort? What's the good of letting all that energy go to waste? What's the matter with making them use their muscles on our bread and butter problem? That's the way I figured it out. Logical? Of course it is. Anybody can see it, but somehow nobody else had thought of the scheme. Well, sir, the minute the idea hit me between the eyes I began rounding up a bunch of able-bodied spirits. I told myself that it was the one way for us mediums to prove beyond any doubt that the spirit calling business is no fake. Then I hunted for a ranch where I wouldn't be bothered with meddlers. I'd rather have tried the experiment in a factory,

because I'm something of a mechanical genius myself, but I was afraid of being put in an asylum or stoned by a mob. People are still frightfully superstitious, you know."

"And the plan worked?" I gasped.

"You bet it worked," beamed Canby. "I tell you there's nothing like it. It's like getting money from home. It's like taking candy from a baby. It's like hiking back to the garden of Eden. And the beauty of it is that you can apply it to any industry. I predict that in five years my system of ghost labor will have revolutionized the world. The mines, the shops, the factories, the railroads and the stores will all be operated by spirits for the benefit of men. We'll have ghost engineers and firemen, ghost ticket punchers, ghost chauffeurs for our automobiles and ghost laborers to build the smoothest boulevards you ever dreamed of. We'll have ghost laundrymen and scrub-women, ghost cooks and waiters; we'll even have ghost nurse-maids to wheel our baby carriages for us. We'll have ghost clerks in the stores, and mighty attentive they will be, too, and ghost brick-layers and builders, and there won't be any labor unions to object, because toil for men will have been abolished and every last jack of us will be a bloated aristocrat. Yes, I alone can call enough spirits from the other sphere to do the work of the world."

"But, Mr. Canby," I objected, "aren't the ghosts themselves likely to organize a union and go on strike?"

"Not at all. There's nothing they like better than work."

"But are your ghost workmen always satisfied?" I probed, remembering Canby's words to his wife as I listened at the window. "Don't they ever ask any favors?"

"Well," confessed Canby, "there's one thing that has given me a little annoyance. They do love an old-fashioned ha'nt, and they've been pestering me to let them take one. In the past I've not allowed them to go off the place, and they've had to be content to do their dances around the rabbit holes in the pasture. But now I've promised them a night off for a good old ha'nt of Jim Simpkins, who's been letting his hogs run on my barley. Jim Simpkins will be scared some—Ha! ha! Just wait a couple o' days. That ghost dance will be the talk of the country."

"But isn't that ha'nting mania itself likely to interfere with

the general application of your system? Won't the people be prejudiced against spirits with such tastes and refuse to have anything to do with them?"

"The people will become educated," replied Canby. "As soon as they get over their superstitious terror of the departed brothers they won't mind the ha'nts one bit, and as soon as they don't mind, then the spirits won't care to indulge, as the fun with them all comes in scaring the other fellow. Oh, you can't find any flaw in the scheme, young man. It's going to save society, and don't you forget it. Don't you forget, either, that the honor and glory will belong to Hiram Canby, who buried his genius for thirty years within the four walls of an Old Curiosity Shop."



The Dragon's Fang.*

BY J. CLARKSON MILLER.



HAVE several reasons for confiding to paper the account of an experience with which, I believe, no other man in this day and age has met. In the first place, I realize that I am a marked man—that at any moment the end may come—and that unless I myself tell the tale no one will ever know the real cause of my death. Then, too, I can think of nothing else—the scenes of this terrible drama are being constantly re-enacted before me, so that the writing down of an account of the original performance seems to lift, to some extent, the great weight from my mind. And in the third place, I believe it will make an interesting story to any one who may come to read it, in spite of my poor ability in the telling. I am, of course, more accustomed to repeating the words of some one else than to writing my own lines—still I believe that the inherent interest of my story will overcome the defects in the telling of it.

With this prologue, or apology, whichever you may choose to call it, let me tell my story as simply as possible. I do not ask the reader to accept it, although every word is as true as truth; I only ask that I at least be given the credit of believing it myself and of having no intention to deceive.

First, let me introduce myself: I am Trevor Morlaine, an actor, and like most of my profession am possessed of a very erratic temperament, which has caused me many minutes of the most intense mental suffering. Since childhood I have been subject to attacks of what is commonly known as “the blues,” during which I suffer all the tortures of a lost soul. I am fully aware of my eccentric nature—no one more so than I myself—and I have tried to overcome it, but in vain!

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Moreover, for the past few years I have been strongly addicted to the use of opium and cocaine, consuming large quantities of these drugs. How I acquired this habit is of no consequence here — suffice it to say that I have been subject to it for some time — I offer no apology because of it.

Some time after beginning the habitual use of opium, which followed the acquisition of the cocaine habit, I became possessed of a peculiar hobby in the shape of a mania for things Chinese. I haunted curio shops and bazaars, buying enormous quantities of Chinese wares, pottery, brasswork and the like. I spent hours poring over books of Chinese history, legends and customs — I even began the study of the Chinese language, under the tutorship of the proprietor of my favorite opium parlor. I can offer no explanation for this strange mania. It came upon me suddenly, like an attack of fever, and feverishly I followed its dictates. Indeed, I became so engrossed in my studies and researches that I almost forgot my craving for drugs, entirely losing my desire for cocaine and consuming only a small quantity of opium.

During all this time I was rehearsing my new play, a four-act drama called "The Net." In the company selected to support me in this piece was a very beautiful young lady, Miss Shiela Carden, who was cast for the ingénue rôle. Strangely enough, I soon became very much infatuated with Miss Carden, who in her sweet, childish manner had from the first confided to me her hopes, her ambitions and her heart-aches. Realizing my utter unworthiness of her, I am proud to say that I kept my passion locked within my heart. I treated her as a parent might treat a child, for she was truly a child in innocence — and almost one in years.

We began our season late, the first performance being put on in early October. The piece proved to be very successful, both critics and public were kind, and we played nightly to crowded houses. In spite of the fact that it was her first appearance on the professional stage, Shiela at once bounded into popularity. Her beauty, winsomeness and naïveté, brought her audiences to her feet, and the name of Shiela Carden appeared far oftener in the newspaper accounts of the play than that of Trevor Morlaine, in spite of the fact that I was, theoretically at least, the star. I,

however, far from feeling professional jealousy, rejoiced in her success; — I was prouder of it than I had ever been of my own.

After the piece had settled down for its all-winter run, I became more and more engrossed in my pursuit of things Chinese. I even neglected Shiela, for several weeks seeing her only at performances. In the meantime an event, seemingly harmless enough, took place, which is the cause of this chronicle. A well known millionaire clubman, whom I shall call Herbert Hammond, came, saw and was conquered. That is to say he came to a performance of "The Net," and fell deeply in love with Shiela. He contrived to meet her through mutual friends and immediately became a constant worshipper at her shrine. All this took place before I became aware that Hammond, whom I knew slightly, had even met Shiela.

When I found that out I was both glad and sorry — glad because I knew Hammond to be a fine young fellow, a man in the fullest sense of the word, and sorry because I was afraid of losing Shiela. Not that I had the slightest intention of offering myself to her, but I knew that her marriage with Hammond would take her into a world different from mine.

Several days after I became aware of the situation, I was sitting in my dressing-room smoking a cigarette and waiting for my entrance cue in the first act. I had come to the theatre early that evening; there still remained several minutes before orchestra call, when a light knock sounded at my door.

"Come in," I called. The door opened and Shiela's pretty face was thrust in. I can close my eyes now and see her as she appeared at that moment. Dainty, petite, she did not look the eighteen years she owned. Her pretty, childish face flushed, her great brown eyes were as smiling, as were her full red lips, and her glorious hair, coiled and twisted, gleamed like polished bronze in the dim light.

She came in and threw her slender figure into a chair facing mine. I looked at her closely and thought of Hammond. What a stunning couple they would make! She with her childish womanliness, winsome manner and fresh beauty; he with his noble manhood. And yet I hated to think of it because —

Shiela was speaking.

"Dear old Trek," she said, calling me by the name she had invented for me, "I came to tell you something before any one else knows of it. Listen, Trek," and her eyes brightened, "I am engaged!" She looked at me expectantly, happiness beaming in her face. I said nothing for a moment — could say nothing.

Finally, "It's Hammond?" I asked.

"Yes," and then when I said nothing further, "but you don't seem a bit glad or surprised or anything. I thought you would be glad with me, Trek. Aren't you pleased?"

"Yes, of course," I managed to say, "of course I am, little girl, but you completely took me off my feet by your sudden way of breaking the news to me."

She laughed.

"You are very happy, aren't you?" I asked myself rather than her. She nodded and I reached and took her little gloved hand.

"Then let me congratulate both of you," I said, "for I can't see how either of you could have done better. I hope I may see Hammond tonight and congratulate him personally. You will leave the company at once?"

"No," she said, "Bert has been called south on business and I am going to stay with the play until he comes back. Mr. Delft will have a girl here to watch me in the part so that I can leave as soon as he returns. I must let her have a chance to learn the lines at least. And besides," here she sighed ever so slightly, "I don't want to break off here so quickly. Everybody has been so nice to me here, the manager, the people, the audiences and everybody. I've learned to love the place — why I even know 'props' and every 'grip' by name. And you, Trek, you have been so good to me. I don't know what I am going to do without my 'big brother.'"

"But I may come and see you sometimes?"

"Of course. Any and all times — but it won't be the same. Do you remember," she asked, "do you remember during rehearsals how you comforted me when I thought I was doing everything wrong; how you taught me little tricks of the trade, how to laugh and cry, how to look frightened or happy or sad; even how to put on my make-up?"

Did I remember? *Don't* I remember yet? If I should live a

million years every word that passed between us would be remembered to the end.

"Of course," I said; "but with a less apt pupil——"

"No flattery," she laughed; "leave that to lovers. But I must hurry — orchestra's called."

"Shiela," I had to watch my voice to keep it from trembling, "you will lunch with me to-night?"

"Surely." She rose to go, but stopped. "I have something to show you that **will** interest you — something very, very wonderful," she added, and, with a bright little nod, was gone.

After the performance Shiela and I went to a little Chinese restaurant, a favorite haunt of theatrical folk, and seated ourselves in a little curtained booth. It was a wonderful place — this of Ching Chu's — Oriental, ancient and mysterious. Our booth was walled in by hangings of the richest purple Chinese silk, embroidered with dragons and serpents and strange birds and beasts of outlandish shapes and colors. The tables were of bamboo, the service of delicate silver and hammered brass, with tiny dishes and cups of the rarest and most exquisitely painted china. Above our heads hung a brazier in which a delicate incense smoked, filling the room with a pungent perfume. Great paper lanterns flooded the booth with soft colored light.

I tapped on a little muffled gong that stood on the table and almost instantly Wu, the head-waiter, appeared, clad in glistening silk and satin. I gave him our order and as he slipped noiselessly out I turned to look at Shiela. How beautiful she was in the soft light of the swinging lanterns! Never before had her great eyes beamed with such velvety softness — never before had her delicately tinted face glowed with such a spiritual light. I felt the hot blood leap in my veins, I became almost mad with the desire to crush her in my arms, a dizziness blinded me and the blue smoke of the incense burned in my nostrils.

She was speaking.

"I told you I had something to show you, Trek," she was saying, "and this is just the place to show it. It goes so well with the setting," and as she spoke she drew from her waist a small, flat box of morocco leather and handed it to me.

"Open it," she said.

I took the box, looked at it, and pressed the catch. The box flew open. The sight of its contents almost stopped my breath. There, lying in the black velvet lining, was the most wonderful pearl I had ever seen. It was almost as big as a pigeon's egg, dazzlingly white on its black background, yet sparkling with an opalescent glow I have never before or since known a pearl to possess. It was shaped like the canine tooth of some great beast, broad at the base and tapering to a blunt point in a regular curve. I stared at it in speechless wonder.

"What do you think of it?" asked Shiela.

"It is wonderful," I gasped, "wonderful."

For some time we both sat in silence, eyes fixed on the radiant jewel. The pungent odor of the burning incense seemed to grow stronger and stronger, the dull light seemed to grow more and more soft and weird. My nerves became gradually strung tighter and tighter until it seemed that something must give way under the tension.

When I finally raised my eyes I looked squarely into those of Wu, the waiter, which were staring like two great black beads, opened so wide as to almost overcome the Mongolian slant. His thick lips were parted, his yellow face was pale so that it looked like the dead yellow-white of a cat-fish's belly, and his yellow forehead was wrinkled like an old parchment. When my eyes met his, his expression changed, or rather vanished, as his face re-assumed the expressionless calm of the Oriental. He came to the table, set down his steaming tray and silently glided between the curtains.

In spite of the fact that I myself had expressed as great astonishment, the expression on the Chinaman's face as he had gazed upon the great pearl worried me. I looked at Shiela. She was looking at the brazier above our heads, nervously tapping the paper-like edge of her saucer with a white forefinger.

"Where did you get this?" I asked.

"Bert gave it to me this afternoon," she replied. "He said he bought it of an old Chinaman who seemed anxious to get rid of it. The old fellow hinted that it was sacred to some horrible god in his own country, Bert said. Somehow it frightens me," she added shivering, "but I cannot keep from looking at it. It

fascinates me like the eyes of a snake. But of course I am foolish. It can't be anything but a mere pearl—a very peculiar one, of course, but still only a stone. And yet——” here she hesitated.

“Let me look at it closer,” I said, as I took it in my fingers. I examined it carefully. Around the base there seemed to be a series of minute indentations, like scratches, marring the otherwise smooth surface. I took from my waistcoat pocket a powerful lens which I always carried, and held it over the pearl. The scratches formed themselves into characters under the powerful influence of the lens. My studies of the Chinese language enabled me to read:

*The great Chung-Li; his breath is fire, his fangs are death.
Guard thy throat.*

I could feel Shiela's hot breath on my face as she leaned forward to look through the lens.

“Why, there are letters on it,” she cried. “Can you read them?”

“No,” I lied, “I cannot read them.” I restored the lens to my pocket, the pearl to its case. The curtains parted and Wu stole in.

“Pardon, sir,” he said in his excellent English, “but I have brought fresh tea.” He set down the little brass pot on the table and left. I poured for Shiela and myself, lit a cigarette and sat there looking at her. The delicate aroma of the cigarette blended with pungent smoke of incense as we sipped the steaming tea. Neither of us spoke. Shiela's face reflected the look of nervous tension I knew my own must be wearing. A brass gong struck softly somewhere in the place and the incense from the brazier floated down to our nostrils, borne on some unseen current of heavy air.

By the intense quiet which prevailed I knew that we must be the only patrons left in the place. The light grew dimmer and dimmer and the smell of the incense more and more powerful. I felt a strange, inexplicable terror creeping over me, coupled with a feeling of weakness in every muscle of my body. My eyes became heavy, my throat contracted, my head began to roar like the beating of a million waves upon the sands. I tried to shout for Wu, but no sound came. I heard the thud of a fall, and by

a great effort I opened my eyes and saw that Shiela had fallen from her chair. I tried to rise, but could not, my eyes grew heavier and heavier, the choking sensation became stronger and stronger until I felt myself falling, falling, and heard a great crash. Then I knew no more.

When I came to my senses I looked about for Shiela. She was gone. There on the floor lay her hat and jacket in a heap; nearby was the morocco case that had held the pearl—the jewel itself was gone.

I rose to my feet and staggered through the curtains into the open room of the restaurant. Everything was as still as death, no one was near. At the back of the long hall-like room I saw a little door, and in front of it on the floor lay one of Shiela's gloves. I rushed down the hall, through the curtained door into a closet-like enclosure lined with tufted silk and lighted by a glowing red paper lantern. There, upon a silken couch, was something covered with a counterpane of purple satin on which was embroidered, in green and red, a great dragon, with only one tooth, which glowed like living fire. Beneath this figure were some Chinese characters in black. I read:

The great Chung-Li; his breath is fire, his fangs are death. Guard thy throat.

I tore back the satin sheet. Beneath it, with an expression of the most ghastly terror on her white face, great eyes staring at the ceiling, lay Shiela. The lace about her throat was torn into shreds, and on the delicate flesh was a purple mark, shaped like the tooth of a great beast.

I could feel my hair rise on my head, my flesh crept and I screamed like a woman with the horror of it all. Shrieking like a maniac, I turned and ran until I found myself in the street. I found a police station and with half a dozen officers retraced my steps to the restaurant. It seemed that we would never get there. I urged my escort on until they panted like dogs in August. We crept cautiously up the narrow stairs and into the largest room of the place, but no one was there. The lights were low and dull, some had burned entirely out. We rushed back to the closet in the rear, but Shiela's body was gone. Ching-Chu and Wu have never been located, Shiela's body has never been found,

and the great pearl has vanished utterly. A few days ago I received through the mail a note, written in Chinese characters, reading:

The great Chung-Li; his breath is fire, his fangs are death. Guard thy throat.

I know that I am marked. I know that I am to follow Shiela as a sacrifice to the great Chung-Li; and yet I do not fear. In the great beyond there will be no unworthiness, no love unrequited or unsatisfied, no lives wasted. I am waiting calmly for the time when I, like her, shall feel the fire of the dragon's fang.

.

Several months ago quite a stir was created by the peculiar death of Trevor Morlaine, a talented actor, in an apartment house in New York. At the morgue it was noticed that his throat bore a peculiar mark, shaped like the tooth of a great beast, and in color a deep purple. His death was ascribed by the coroner to heart-failure caused by the excessive use of drugs, but several weeks later the foregoing manuscript was found among some old papers in his desk.



The One Phobia.*

BY HARRIS MERTON LYON.



HE went to bed that night in a preoccupied fashion, thinking of a conversation he had had at the club with a well-known expert in nervous diseases. Of all the thousand phobias to which the brain is heir, his mind dwelt upon but one, and dwelt upon that one insistently—hypso-phobia; and the reason for this was that it was his one greatest fear, this dread of high places, this fear of looking down from a lofty height. To him a steeplejack was the most marvelous phenomenon in animate creation. It was terrifying at times, this horror he had. He could not, in walking across a bridge, look down at the water without becoming dizzy, without wishing to throw himself into the stream beneath. He could not ride upwards in an elevator without becoming faint at thought of the height to which he had ascended. He was afraid to stand out upon a fire escape, he did not dare to look out of a fourth story window upon the street below. There was always a haunting consciousness within him that he would involuntarily let himself fall out of the window.

Tonight he had listened to the physician's idle, yet interesting, chat without revealing this weakness of his own, and had followed with caught breath the detailing of symptom after symptom identical with those which he himself experienced. With these things in his mind he went to bed.

.

When he awoke it was broad day and the sky was overcast with a garish green light such as the light which precedes a storm or a hurricane. He himself felt decidedly nervous and queer, as if laboring under a strange tension, but this he attributed to the atmospheric conditions about him; possibly, also the eye-strain of

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which he frequently complained had something to do with this present light-headedness. He remembered to have drunk a large pot of coffee the night before; the caffeine would be sure to affect him thus. And yet — was his condition really due to these outward, evident causes? There seemed to be more than that to affect him. There seemed to be an impulse subtly at work, straining at his will, trying to lure him, to draw him somewhere. What was it? He did not greet the morning as a man refreshed by sound sleep. He tried to think: Had he dreamed any ghastly dream during the night which would still influence him, which would pursue him even into his waking hours? Yes, he remembered that he had!

What had he dreamed? He struggled to get his wits together and consider the events of the past night. He found himself bathing his eyes in cold water in order to shock himself into clear-headedness; he pulled the stopper out of a camphor bottle, and let the penetrating odor bite its way into his befuddled brain; he remembered that he was mechanically dressing himself; he had the sensation of going through movement after movement of this sort, all the while vainly groping in his memory.

Of a sudden he stopped. "Great God," he said to himself, "I know now what it was!" He had dreamed, amid some awful, horrid setting, that he saw his body, his dead body, somewhere. It lay face downward, with the arms spread out. Yes, he recalled these items in the dream now, perfectly clearly. The rest was laborious work. What else had happened? Was there any other sensation? With the feeling of a peevish child, he realized that he could not think. All he knew was that he had dreamed he was dead; and that the nightmare pursued him even now, into the sickly light of a new day. He shuddered with uneasiness and looked about him apprehensively. The carpet, the chairs, the books — everything seemed strange; there was a wan, colorless, impalpable quality to each bit of familiar furniture, no doubt due to the pale light of the heavens. The hushed closeness of the place was sickening to his overwrought nerves. He felt that he must get out of there before he shrieked aloud. He could not bear the image of that dream-corpsé before his mind's eye, ghastly, motionless, in sharp relief.

Moreover, there was a steady, insistent, weirdly unpleasant attraction at work upon him, something impelling him to leave, drawing him as if by unseen threads, out of his room and down on to the street. Whither was it calling him? He felt it, but could not guess its meaning. He wondered vaguely what it was all about; he tried in vain to analyze his physical condition. Hyperæsthesia? Hysteria? He hardly thought so. It must be the weather. He started to ring for some coffee, and then bethought him that the beverage would only make things worse. He glided to the window and drew up the blind. He had never seen such a sky. It was flat, oppressive, and pale green in color, the color of sea water when a diver opens his eyes a fathom beneath the waves. There was no sun, no clouds. He glanced at his watch, but his troubled eyes could not distinguish whether it was eight o'clock or twenty minutes to twelve. More than likely, he concluded, it was twenty minutes to twelve. In that case he had slept exactly eight hours!

He marveled at the untrustworthiness of his eyes; a slight fog seemed to roll and tumble across the scope of his vision, and he mentally noted that he must have the orbs examined and adopt spectacles hereafter—a thing he had been intending to do ever since he first felt the strain upon them.

All the time, as he stood revolving these matters, he felt the vague impulse at work in him, the impulse which he could not fathom; it seemed like a gnawing at his brain.

With a gesture of impotent disgust at his own weakness this morning he turned his gaze again out the open window. Slowly he took in the old, familiar landmarks, the news stand on the corner, the grocery opposite, the gaudy cigar sign half a block down the street, the barber shop—and then! His brain swam giddily with a sense of surfeit. He had found the answer to the impulse!

A stone's throw from where he stood, looming gray and soft against the background of the monotonous sky, and seeming higher than the skies themselves, he espied a lofty office-building in the course of erection. Steel girders protruded two hundred feet or more into the air; three of the stone sides had already been set into place; on the fourth side a spider's web of scaffolding covered the entire wall, and at the highest point on this scaffold-work he saw

a solid wooden platform such as workmen use as a support. It must be twelve feet square, yet from where he stood it seemed no larger than the top of his centre table. What it was that seized him and hurried him on he could never have told; a mad notion, perhaps, that he would satisfy this insistent craving, that he would quiet this nervous unrest, much as a wrecked drunkard seizes drink, as an opium fiend eats additional quantities of the drug. He snatched up his hat, burst out of the door, and ran.

Events thereafter raced past his mental vision with the swiftness of a cinematograph, quivering, fluttering, coming rapidly out of obscurity into the glare of his illuminating brain-heat. He seemed to move viciously in quick jerks, down the stairs, out on to the stale streets, past unheeding groups of people who stared at him like ghosts, into the building—had a delirium stolen into his blood this morning?—up ladder after ladder, triumphantly mounting, amazed at his own bravery. Where was his hypsophobia now? What would he do when he reached that platform? He did not know. He remembered every nail in that last ladder, and yet it seemed to him he had come up it as swiftly as if he had been shot out of a mortar. He looked back. No one was following him. He felt of his heart. It was beating at a fearful rate with hard, dry thumps against his ribs.

In a flash he was out upon the platform, his brow bared to the breeze, exultant, glorious in the high air. How clean it all was up there! He looked over toward his own room and laughed gaily. It seemed to him that he was a bird, soaring and swimming in the ether, rinsed by all the purity of the upper sky, free and joyous, sustained, swooping gently in great rings, up, up, up . . .

Suddenly he felt a blinding stroke across his eyes, a yawning at the pit of his stomach, something choking him like a ball or an apple lodged in his throat, and he caught himself leaning fascinated at the very edge of the planking. The reason of this was that his hat had fallen from his hand and in sickening little circles was drifting earthward. His nervous fingers clung to the trembling woodwork, he found himself unaccountably stretching up on tiptoe, he could not catch a breath while the black bit of headgear, with many a coil and spiral, let itself gently down. He tried to turn his eyes away and could not. The old fear had returned upon

him. The blood fleeing from his skin, had left the sweat upon his brow as cold as the sweat upon a corpse. He no longer felt the first exhilaration, the uplift of his senses. A certain cowardice struck into the very marrow of his bones and left him dizzy and shaken before his impending fate.

All was changed. The gusts of wind, instead of bringing a sense of freedom, now roared about his ears so violently that they terrified him; he imagined he saw the scaffolding rock to and fro, and even felt the stone walls sway slightly beneath his hand. A great dread rushed over him that this breeze would blow him off of the platform. He looked rashly down and his eyes were blurred by the sight of a myriad of pigmy objects, human beings crawling about like ants, carriages and wagons appearing as tiny bugs or beetles, streets as ribbons, houses as little cardboard playthings.

The rapidity with which his mind worked seemed inconceivable. He paid scarcely any attention to the phenomenon, yet felt indistinctly that his brain was clicking off its pictures more swiftly than a camera's shutter, that each tiny scene was thrown out before him as a film, bitten by the developing fluid, flashes out its negative presentation.

Once more his stomach yawned; then all consciousness seemed to swoon. His thoughts swirled and reeled and swirled in a wild tumult; a maelstrom seemed sucking him in, and he felt seasick; vast noises roared through his head, as if his blood were congested there; red and green colors rotated before his eyes; his teeth were clenched together, and his tongue was dry; and always around and around in a tremendous mental whirlpool his thoughts spun and swung, spun and swung like a grotesque, irresponsible, crazy pendulum. His vibrating nerves had the sensation of cracked, twanging wires. His throat was completely stopped now by the round ball he had swallowed. Where had he swallowed it? He doubled up with fear, racking each tendon to its uttermost tautness. And then there was another change.

Far below him the pigmy people started coming up, sailing toward him in a great dream, growing larger and larger. The cabs left off their bug-like semblance and slowly grew into cabs; the ribbons became white streets. Things seemed metamorphosing as through ages of slow evolution. He was watching this with

lulled senses when, in a terrible flash, he realized that he was falling !

It was *he* who was dropping toward the earth, *he* who had left the platform ! His whole sequence of living flashed across his mind like one long, disjointed streak of lightning. Half-seconds seemed like millions of glorious, golden years, filled with the rarest passions, the most poignant pains. But above every other feeling loomed Fear like an awful god, eternal, relentless ; the Fear that, siren-like, had lured him to the top of this tower, the Fear that had fascinated his eyes, the Fear that was now squeezing his body with an unendurable force. A great hand seemed to crush him, even as he fell. In mid-air he shrieked, shrieked with a long, spasmodic wail, and when his voice was at its highest his heart swelled in his bosom and snapped.

.

The maid, on entering his room next morning, found the occupant prone on the floor, dead. His features were violently distorted and wrinkled almost beyond recognition. He had evidently fallen out of bed about midnight.



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In the Interest of Science.*

BY EMMET F. HARTE.



MOKY hailed originally from the Big Horn basin and—aside from his worldly habits of tobacco, profanity, bad whiskey and aversion to work—was of breezy manner and playful disposition. A subtle air of romance clung to him—the picturesque, airy glamour of the great West, the West of the Unfenced Range. It was rumored that Smoky had in bygone days attained a not enviable repute along the line of altering cattle brands—even that Wyoming had become too warm a climate for him. But, be that as it may, Smoky held his hearers, when he willed, in the net of his fancy; he was a conversational artist.

“Speaking about this dry wave which is sweeping over the South and East where they say you have to get a pill-peddler’s prescription in writing before you can even take a bath,” remarked Smoky, on occasion, “reminds me that Southeastern Utah would be a hot location for these parched-throated, temperance rooters to colonize in; they could take their drinking water along in tablet form and when they wanted a wash they could get down and flutter in the alkali dust, like a hen does. I once took a saunter across the Nioche desert which to think of

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to-day gives me a thirst; I thank you, I don't care if I do. As I was saying, it was some years ago, along about the time the free range went into the low-down hands of the sheep-herders. The cow-man was feeling pretty pizenous and four of us boys made a so-called raid into the Green River country, one night, expecting to smear out a certain camp of unclean desecrators of the white man's grass. We struck snags; we stirred up a nest of skunks which could pick off vest-buttons with Winchesters by moonlight at a hundred and fifty yards and had not a compunction — not one. Squirrel-shooters was what that outfit consisted of, man, fancy gun artists. Our party left two with their troubles over and one plugged through and through the upper lungs who got away by the assistance of yours respectfully that also received a .30:40 through the shoulder, a graze on the side and two through the hat. That sheep-herder outfit was entirely too sarcastic with their shooting. Then they sent compliments and delicacies of the season and mentioned that they would feel more or less worried during the few days that elapsed before they made a walking sieve out of a certain person called Smoky, placing bets on the same. I, feeling disgusted with such notoriety, rode three days and nights and took a change of scenics.

“Went into the prospecting business on a small scale after that, and worked across the divide that fall, getting as far south as Colorado. The following summer I took a contract to explore the Nioche desert, the same being a second King Solomon's mines for treasure, according to my figures.

“I wandered around in company with a person called Skeeter Malone, Irish with blue hair, and good company until we run short of tobacco, whereupon he hits for Carson or Tucson, I forget which, and promises to drift back inside of three weeks with more grub and a pack-mule. He took along all the money. I afterwards heard of him in Sydney, Australia. If I should ever run across that same Skeeter I'll shore take the time to change the map on his face considerable as a token of remembrance. I puttered around in that vicinity until my water-hole went dry and then I moved over about ten miles eastward to another place. That was getting low also and I thought I'd bet-

ter skip across the desert while I had a chance and not waste any more time. It was about three days' journey, I figured.

"It was the same old fool-story, there's been others; some of them got through and some of their bones are out there yet, lying around between the Rockies and the Sierras. Take my word that little three letters d-r-y means something on the alkali plain with the sun overhead making a mummy out of you. I went dry. It wasn't long or I wouldn't be here to-day, saying here's to your good health! (That's a mighty fine article!) But, as I was saying, I remember the thirst and beginning to get locoed.

"Then I staggered around a sandy rise, down into an arroyo and on to a little dried-up wart of a man, wearing spectacles and one of these here helmet-hats and accompanied by a solemn-looking and uncomplaining burro as natural as a photo.

"I tried to say something casual and sociable and also borrow a drink, but all I could do was make a noise like a dust-storm 'rattling o'er the stony street,' during a protracted drought; the little man wasn't all day taking in the exact situation, though, and the way he put me under treatment and softened up my caked places was good to look at even for a burro, who was the only spectator. They only had about a gallon of water themselves, and no more in sight except in a mirage lake off to the south, which was good Christian Science but awful poor for wetting, but my new friend just splattered it around promiscuous, like he owned a perpetual water right. As soon as I got the roof of my mouth and my tongue soaked loose from each other I mentioned it. The little man twiddled his spectacles contentedly and chuckled and the burro wiggled his long ears. They didn't seem to be worrying overly, so I didn't see any use of me borrowing any trouble myself, to prove which, I finished up the last drop they had an' joined in the general satisfaction prevailing, even if the thermometer was about a hundred and thirty-five or forty in the shade, with the understanding of course that there was shade, which there wasn't.

"The water made me feel better. I had renewed my lease and felt revived enough to crack a joke when I happened to let my gaze wander to a near-by cactus and as plain as day saw a

yellow and white tom-cat sitting there with a blue ribbon around his neck and right by him, curled up snug, was one of these stubby-nosed, curly-tailed pug dogs, asleep. I didn't make no fuss at first — I waited to see if it would wear off. It didn't. Then I asked the gent in spectacles if he noticed anything peculiar about me? He said nothing struck him funny enough to laugh at. All the time I was watching that tom-cat and finally he blinked his eyes and yawned.

“‘Mr. Man,’ I said, reaching for my six-shooter, ‘don’t pay any attention to me, but I’m going to take a pop at that there cactus to ease my mind. I’m seeing things.’

“‘Holy Cæsar!’ he yelled, ‘don’t shoot! There’s my cat and dog under that cactus.’ I fell on his neck.

“‘You’ve saved me!’ I said. ‘I thought I had gone wrong in the attic, sure enough, when I saw them two animiles there in a place like this.’

“‘I’ll introduce myself,’ he said, ‘I’m Professor Charles Van Strenger of Boston.’

“‘Happy, I’m sure,’ I said, ‘I’m William H. Riggs of the Big Horn Basin, sometimes called Smoky for convenience. I take it, you’re one of them Science fellows, from your magnifying glass. Bugs or bones?’

“‘Well, just now I am looking for a certain kind of a cactus,’ he said, not seeming to see any joke. It was a joke even to a dying man to see that little, solemn-looking cuss with his burro, pug-dog and tom-cat pattering around out there under that sizzling sun on the alkali sand. I laughed loud and long. It finally nettled the Prof somewhat, and he asked:

“‘Are you sure you’re not having some kind of a spell now?’

“‘Don’t mind me,’ I said, ‘I’m laughing at a funny story I heard last summer; the point just come to me. Are you staying around in this condemned country very long?’

“‘Well,’ he said, ‘I don’t expect to make this my home. Do you live hereabouts?’ I exploded again.

“‘I’ve been prospecting a little,’ I said.

“‘Know much about minerals?’ he inquired.

“‘I should snicker and snort!’ I returned, scenting a tenderfoot, ‘I’m an original mineral expert. What I don’t know

about the yellow and white and red metals in their native haunts, wouldn't pay you to fool away time over.'

" 'You surprise me!' he said, producing a fat black cigar by which he saved my life the second time.

" 'Aside from a few little whims in the animal line,' I remarked, 'you and me could get along fine, Prof, for days and days — in token of which loan me a match.'

" 'Don't you like harmless animals?' he asked, surprised.

" 'Well,' I said, affable, 'I don't mind confiding that a pug dog makes me feel hateful; they look like they might have been going somewhere in a thundering hurry sometime and run into something; a pug dog looks insulting and sneery to me. As for that there cat, I should think if you'd skin him, he'd be more comfortable in this climate. The burro I indorse.' And I changed the subject.

" 'How far are we from any accumulation of moisture, if you won't be offended?' I asked.

" 'About four hours,' he said. Which same answer relieved me, so I took the Prof in as a chum and a side pard, menagerie and all, even helping to corral and load the pets on to the burro before we started.

On the way across the hot, sandy plain, I even loosened up a few and related the Prof some lurid ones to beguile him.

" 'And you say there have really been diamonds found in Arizona?' he inquired.

" 'I do say so,' I declared, 'I've found at least a peck, myself; one I remember I sold to an insurance agent in Tombstone for \$30,000.'

" 'Phew!' said the Prof.

" 'Sure!' I continued. 'And there's a tribe of Injuns called the Pinheads, or something, that live in caves along the cliffs, and they have gold and silver mines, nobody knows how rich, and precious stones of all kinds — rubies, garnets, topazes, amethysts, opal and others I disremember — to throw at the birds. Arizona is lousy with 'em.' I said.

" 'I've heard there's many old ruins in that section,' he said. 'prehistoric ruins of cities and such.'

" 'Now you've touched on my hobby,' I said, gleeful, 'Six

Eastern scientific guys and me once dug out a buried city in New Mexico, and say, we made a clean-up! Fine statutes and oil paintings in gold frames and brass furniture and everything you could think of. You wouldn't believe me if I'd tell you we found a solid gold buffalo, life size; we did.' I wanted to see how much he would stand without squealing.

" ' You surprise me ! ' was all he said, without batting his eye.

" Then I hitched my six-shooter around more comfortable, took a new hold and told him about Lost River and the locoed chief of the Hualpies and the petrified forest and that mastodons and other strange creatures roamed in droves along the head waters of the Snake. I spread myself on the wonders of Cañon Diablo, where, I said, awful-looking, weird things come out of holes and dance around lakes of boiling brimstone at night. I told him about the mammoth red bats of Roaring Cave in the Grand Cañon and the big Serpent of the Gila River. The more I came through with, the tickleder he was — and interested? I should say so.

" Then I handed him the one about the rooster I saw in Butte that had his head shot off just about the wings and they put a silver tube in the top of his wind-pipe with a valve in it so he could breathe; I thought that would throw him, but it didn't.

" ' Wonderful ! ' he said. ' Most remarkable ! '

" Then I unraveled a fragment or two about Moqui Medicine-men and how they could conjure up thunder-storms in a tent and grow a stalk of corn with ears on it in two hours, or turn a cur-pup into a bull-snake right before your eyes. I couldn't do nothing with him; wore myself out trying to make him beg off, but he swallowed it all.

" ' Your experience has been wide and varied ' he said, ' and your observation very keen and comprehensive. I might say the things you have related are, in fact, uncommon. '

" I should say they were; they were pretty near imaginary.

" Well, we had covered about ten miles or so, in the meantime, and the desert looked as flat, barren and dry as ever, as far as I could see. It was an unbroken stretch of alkali and the heat was flaring up something fierce, even if the sun was getting a little lower in the west and not beating straight down.

“‘ Say, Prof,’ I said, finally, ‘ what about that water? I can see ten miles all around and more than that straight up and it still looks discouraging; you wouldn’t lie to an orphan?’

The Prof looked reproachful and the yellow cat blinked at me out of his basket like I’d forgot my manners.

“‘ You can take a bath, if you want to, in ten minutes,’ said the Prof shortly. I never come any closer disagreeing with my own father than I did then with him, but I kept still for a wonder, concluding to wait the ten minutes at least.

“ Then we came to the jumping off place. Nature cracks some funny jokes around over the country, but she never framed up a completer surprise than that there Prof. Van Strengers’ jumping-off place; you walk along on the alkali, with the dust and the hot heat fogging up into your blistered face and the sun slathering away at you from over and behind, and all of a sudden you start to step, and catch yourself just in time to keep from walking out into air; right there before you is a gash in the ground about fifty yards wide and no fence to keep you from falling over; you sneak up a step and peek over and grab yourself by the suspenders; that gash is cut to the bone. About a mile or so down you can see a little silver lake and some green grass and a cottonwood tree, all correct. It’s as nice as a mirage and about as accessible.

“‘ Amigo,’ I said, thoughtful, after taking a look while the Prof waited, ‘ you don’t happen to have a balloon, that’s in good working order, about you, do you?’ The Prof got in a good humor immediate.

“‘ Come along,’ he said with broad smiles, ‘ I know a way down.’ And he did, a little narrow, dizzy trail wound around the side and after some acrobatics and risk to life, liberty and the course of true love, we landed in the nice soft grass and uncrated the enthusiastic and despicable pug-dog and the self-satisfied tom while the burro loosened the drawstring in his ears and mowed a few swaths.

“ The little lake in the centre was as smooth as ironed silk — not a bit of wind, I don’t suppose, had ever roughed it since it first happened. The bottom of the Cañon was wider than the top; and the whole gash was about a mile long, with hardly a

way to get up or down, only the trail we come by. The sides didn't look so high from the bottom. I think the Prof said it was about 200 feet from the desert straight down to the water. I shook hands six times.

" 'Prof,' I said, 'I'll take back everything I ever thought about you, and I hereby proclaim that if you want to keep a guinea-pig, a white rat, or a bush-spider for a pet, you've got a right to, and I'm for you most prodigious. You are an extinguished gentleman, a true sport and a judge of economics.'

" 'I'm much obliged for your good opinion,' said the Prof, 'come into the house.' I hadn't seen any house, but he had one all right, and that wasn't all he had.

" Around a jut in the rocky wall was a three-story, stone, cliff-dweller mansion as neat and fine as Fifth Avenue, New York, which I haven't seen but have heard of, and if that there science scamp didn't have everything modern, up to standard and bar none, I'll kiss the first Chink I see. He had rooms — about a hundred and fifty of 'em — fitted up for high-living: Cook-room, bedroom, sitting-room, dining-room, parlor, library, cloak-room, ante-room, cellar, roof-garden, vestibule, chapel.

" He had a junk-shop he called a laboratory with all kinds of little contraptions connected therewith. He had books and magazines to read and everything to do heavy housekeeping with, except a female cook. Down alongside the little lake, he had a garden with a toy irrigation ditch, and lettuce, radishes and spuds growing fit to tickle you to death. The whole lay-out appeared to me to be just about as snug and comfortable as Robinson Crusoe ever dared to dream about and I started skirmishing for a job in a roundabout way.

" 'Prof,' I said, 'as near as I can observe by your samples, you've got convenient quarters when once in, but you seem to be some shy a cook. I'll mention, casual, while on the subject, that that's my strong point — I am there with the skillet.'

" 'You surprise me,' he returned, 'and since you mentioned it, I'll allow you to get supper.'

" Well, I spread myself on that supper. No spuds was ever lucky enough to be fried as them, no coffee ever as delicious, no

flap-jacks half as temptatious. The bacon by itself was enough to entice a man five hundred miles away from his happy home, if he knew about it; and we cut a can of apples of some ancient vintage and made turnovers in the grease. The Prof tucked away six and fell back gibbering with delight. I was elected cook without a dissenting vote. If there was any salary attached to my new job, I'll swear I never heard what it was. We forgot to mention it at the time and afterwards things got so interesting and entertaining that I never thought to remind the Prof that I was hired help. The job wasn't hard. I just prognosticated around and smoked the Prof's black cigars and concocted viands whenever we got hungry. I made myself solid with the menagerie and the blooming pug-dog got so he'd follow me around like I was his school chum. The tom-cat was too lazy to follow anything, and a burro prefers his own company to anybody else's — but the pup was a born accompanist. The Prof was busy. I've met a lot of these here science galoots trailing around over this Western country, and they're mostly pecking at rocks, piking for fossiles or accumulating fool things like caterpillars or other specimens as they call them, and think they're smarter than range people anywhere. Perhaps they are — I've never heard what the United States court says on the subject. But the Prof wasn't collecting specimens; he never pecked a rock or caught a butterfly, of which there were some six or eight at large in the valley; he puttered around in his laboratory once in awhile and had bottles of gummy-looking stuff he'd ponder over, besides crocks full of smelly roots and things asoak. One day he says to me:

“‘Smoky,’ he allowed, ‘I wish you'd take the donkey and go down to the south about nine miles, where you'll find an arroyo with some cactoribus scandalous combustibus — or something that sounded like that — growing. Gather me about a bushel and come back by return mail, will you?’ I did. And scratched up my hide some doing it. When we got back the Prof had rigged up a regular distillery, up in one of the rooms, and for awhile I surmised he was going into the moonshine business. I didn't discourage him — it was a thirsty country.

“ Well, he made sour-mash out of the cactus and then he had me make a four-days’ trip to the settlement to get an express package for him. The town was a Mormon village called Prophet’s Choice — I’ve heard it’s been discontinued since — and they had a twice a week stage-line to the railroad. There wasn’t a drop of anything better to drink than water in the town without positively exhibiting at least two rattlesnake bites, so I didn’t sojourn long after I got my errand done. I took back also a few lines of bacon, salt, sugar and other luxuries, and wafted in, sober and melancholy, a whole half-day ahead of schedule. The Prof said he’d missed my cooking, and the pup and the tom were right glad to see me. The Prof opened his package, which consisted of a lot of little bundles and bottles like he was going to start a drug-store. He squinted at them and hum-hawed to himself most sociable. Finally he said:

“ ‘Two drops of this would destroy all the nine lives of our friend here,’ holding up a small bottle and indicating Thomas curled up on the floor, ‘and I mix it in a glassful of sugared water and a teaspoonful of these other two with it and it makes a harmless drink, pleasant and beneficial.’

“ ‘I’ll take your word for it,’ I said, ‘though I wouldn’t pass up about four fingers of good fire water just now if I had it.’

“ ‘Why didn’t you mention it?’ he said, surprised, ‘I’ve got a little somewhere around, I think. I’ll look for it,’ and back he comes with a flat bottle he’d had cached somewhere with not even the label broken. He had saved my life the third time. In return for them two drinks — he allowed me two — I architected a supper for the bunch that put them all down cooing. Prof said it was a culinary, that’s the word he used, a culinary masterpiece.

“ ‘Prof,’ I said, ‘without meaning any offense, and if it’s a fair question, what kind of dope is this you’re concocting up there in your lavatory, or whatever you call it? You’re not making anything good to drink and overlooking your old friend Smoky?’

“ The little cuss hobnobbed with himself for quite a while before answering; he didn’t seem crazy to tell everything, but finally he loosened,

“‘Smoky,’ he said, after awhile, ‘I’m engaged in a secret work — a work of vast importance and far-reaching possibilities — and if I was not certain of success I wouldn’t even give you a hint; as it is, I’ll confide that I have discovered the Elixir of Life.’

“‘I never dreamed of such a business,’ I said, ‘or I’d ’a’ been tiptoeing around with my heart in my throat. What the devil is the Elixir of Life, if it’s a fair question?’

“‘I’ll explain,’ he said, patient as a schoolmarm with an unusually bullet-headed kid, ‘all down through history, certain men have searched and worked to discover a serum that will arrest the decay of tissues’ — that was what he said, exactly. — ‘and they have all failed. This wonderful Elixir, this infusion into the veins of new energy and the restoring of youth, again and again, the prolonging of the life of man into an indefinite period, has been sought after a heap,’ he said, ‘and it remained for me, Professor Van Strenger, in the beginning of the twentieth century, to find the key to the problem.’ I was so interested I forgot to puff and my cigar went out. I hadn’t ever sized up the Prof for being such an entertainer.

“‘I must ask you to keep the secret awhile longer,’ he went on, ‘until I have completed a sufficient supply for extensive experiments.’

“‘Sure,’ I said, ‘Prof, you needn’t be afraid of me spreading it; I don’t see very many people lately and I’m known as the most ferocious kind of a liar anyway, so it wouldn’t be believed.’

“‘Thank you,’ said he, and continued; ‘I have gone further than the others; my discovery not only prolongs life, but restores it. I can raise the dead.’

“Now I had related the Prof some pretty fanciful ones from time to time as they occurred to me, but I hadn’t expected him to try to get back like that. I guffawed. What does he do then? He snapped his talkograph shut like a collapsible tin cup and closed up like a clam. Not another word. Nitto. He had no sense of humor. I saw that the little cuss actually believed what he’d been telling and I tried to square myself. No, he had his feelings hurt and was sorer than barber’s itch. We went to

bed that night non-committal and uncommunicative and in the morning it took two soft-boiled eggs and an armload of tortillas to make the Prof smile; I forgot to say we had, among other things in the animal line, four hens and a terrible pompous old rooster in our gully, and our eggs were as fresh as if just from college.

"Well, when the Prof had lapped up about a dollar and eighty cents' worth of home cooking, he burst into bloom and commenced to tell more about the dope business again.

" 'Smoky,' he said, 'of course you couldn't be expected to believe everything about the Elixir without some visible manifestations of its properties. I have decided to give you a proof. Which of the animals, now, would you say that I thought the most of, if asked?'

" 'Well,' I said, 'the burro is the usefulest, the pup is the friendliest, and the kitty is the least account for any possible thing—I should say, I guess, that you are most sentimental of all about the kitty.'

" 'Good!' said he, 'we'll drown Thomas.'

" 'Drown him?' I said, incredulous.

" 'Drown him,' he said, getting up, 'till he is deader than an Egyptian mummy. Then I'll bring him back to life with the Elixir.'

" 'I'd much rather get rid of the pug,' I said, finally, 'he's such an insolent, insulting, over-fed, smart Alex and —'

" 'All right,' said Prof, 'drown 'em both if you like.'

" 'How about the burro?' I asked, 'and the poultry?'

" 'Never mind them,' he said, 'for the present, the two will do.' The Prof never saw a joke during our acquaintance.

"Well, I caught the pets and attached a twenty-pound rock to each one, under the Prof's directions; then I tied a rope to 'em and anchored 'em to the shore and there was two splashes about a minute apart in our lake and the pug and the tom were across into the happy hunting grounds. I hated to do it—it is against my grain to kill a creature like that for nothing—I even wanted to yank 'em out again; almost begged the Prof to let me, but he said 'No.'

" 'Leave them in until night,' he said, 'then you will admit they are reasonably dead.'

“ ‘I’ll believe they are fairly well extinct in half an hour.’ I said, ‘neither one being frogs or turtles.’

“ ‘Good!’ he said. ‘I want you to be satisfied.’

“ Well, we left them defunct animiles in ten feet of water all that day. Till six p. m. by the Prof’s John Deere watch they soaked, and then, one by one, I pulled ’em out and viewed the remainders. They was shore dead — I’ll vouch for it. Drowned plumb, exact and complete, and we toted them, all wet and drippy, into the lavatory where the Prof expected to do his stunts. I laid ’em out on a flat rock where they could drain and the Prof got out his little bottles and his tools.

“ ‘Which first?’ he asked, rolling up his sleeves.

“ ‘You’re the doctor,’ I said, ‘one’s as dear to me as the other.’

“ ‘Hand me Thomas, then,’ he said. I drained the yellow cat a minute and then held him up while the Prof took his bicycle pump and shot about four fingers of plate blue dope just back of his right ear. Now, wonders never cease in this Western country, and sometimes a man doubts his own eyesight, but this here is straighter than the first five cards out of a new deck: That there tom-cat begun to twitch, then he squirmed and sputtered a little and kicked with his foot; then, I hope to never raise another glass if he didn’t cough, get up and go rub against the Prof’s leg as live as any cat that ever meowed and me with my hair riz up fiercer than the bristles of an Arkansas hog in search of a lost acorn.

“ ‘Now for Marcus Antonius,’ he said, enthusiastic. I looked at that there pug pup, all water-soaked and bedraggled, with his lip curled up and peeled off of his teeth in his customary sneery way, but deader than a mackerel, and I first thought it was a waste of dope to bring him back. He wasn’t any earthly good, but — I gathered him up and brought him over. There was some water sloshing around inside him which seeped out finally, and in five minutes he was wagging his tail. Well, the Prof had certainly delivered the goods. He had produced the results strictly. He also had me roped and flung spraddling; my voice sounded little and far away when I perked up enough to say something out loud.

“ ‘Prof,’ I said, ‘you win. Deuce high is my best. I’m considered something of a judge of cattle, a fair shot, can cook, throw a rope, ride, and hold a mean hand in poker sometimes, but I don’t perform no miracles. At magic, I pass. Your work is too deep for me.’

“ ‘Tut, tut!’ he answered, ‘it’s nothing, I could do the same with you, yourself.’

“ ‘Here, now, Prof,’ I said, scared into a coat of mush-ice all over. ‘Prof, you don’t aim to try no freak work on poor old, harmless Smoky, do you?’

“ ‘My dear man,’ he said, ‘calm yourself. I wouldn’t hurt one hair of that bald spot on your head. I will make a giddy and blithesome youth out of you.’

“ ‘Not me!’ I said, ‘No, you don’t; not for one minute.’

“ He looked disappointed. That night I took turn about sleeping with each eye; the other I kept on the Prof, who slept like an innocent baby and woke up just as fresh as I was groggy. All morning he was busy in his junk-shop making dope and tinkering around among his bottles and crocks; then he come out, loaded up the burro with some grub and water and said he would likely be gone for two days, after some more ungodly plants or something he needed to make a certain kind of a poison out of. He was getting rabid. In the meantime I was to look out for the pets, feed the chickens, keep the distillery going and meditate on the mysteries of life in general.

“ I breathed a terrible sight easier after I saw his pink shirt and big white helmet fade over the top of the cliff; I could now take it cozy and comfortable for at least two days.

“ With all the crazy dopes and medicines that cuss had around, and the designs he had on every living thing loose, I was beginning to feel unsafe in his company. I couldn’t tell when he’d doctor my coffee on the sly and I’d find myself suddenly deader than an Aztec, to be brought back to life, maybe — maybe not. That day I just loafed around lazy, figuring on some scheme to get the Prof’s attentions switched off on some other track. Every game has a counter-play of some kind.

“ As I said, I thought I was all safe for a day or two at least, and that first night went to roost at sundown without

leaving any look-out on duty. I woke up sudden along after midnight. I don't remember *hearing* anything, I just *felt* something, and I opened my sleepy eyes and, over where the moonlight streamed in through the broken wall of the old shack, there squatted the Prof with his bicycle pump, his awls and other things, squinting at a dose of something he was dropping out of a bottle, with his thumb over the hole. I saw it all: He was getting ready to slide me into that there place where you needn't take your suitcase along, and a minute more and I would have been kicking my last. Did you ever see an antelope run? He leaves the ground and swims off through the air, then he floats down, springs, and swims off again. That's the way me and Prof Van Strenger parted company. I was the antelope. One yell and two bumps and I was out on the grass and I was moving. Going up that there trail I just made a blur along the face of the cliff, and when I hit the level, sandy desert up above, I just turned loose, let go, and stampeded for Colorado. They say an Apache will lope off and keep it up all day, but that's just loping. I was scorching the air, making a farewell yellow streak across the Nioche country. I was still running at daylight; by noon I was clear away, and I never went back, neither. I never even *looked* back. I've often thought about the Prof. and wondered what *did* become of the cuss and his Elixir, and whether he was really fixing up to take a shot at me with that squirt gun that night, or whether he was up to something else. Maybe he was just going to invigorate the burro, after all, or put some corn cure on a sore toe. Anyway, he didn't dope *me*."



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Nathan.*

BY C. STEPHEN BRADD.



T was, I think, on the 6th day of December, at my farm near Ladysmith, South Africa, that the letter arrived from Sir Arthur Meredith. Sir Arthur and I had been very close friends for many years, indeed, ever since early Oxford days, and a letter from him with news of himself was always very welcome. But this letter contained little about himself. After a conventional line or two, he entered on the business which was evidently the main purpose of his letter :

I wish to announce to you that I am sending you a present. You will be rather perplexed when you hear what it is. And yet I make bold to say beforehand that it is the most valuable present I have ever made you. It is nothing more than a servant—a black servant—I might say a slave, but I know how you dislike the term. His name is Nathan. He has been with me for some time as a very close body-servant. I picked him up in the interior, on one of my expeditions, about four years ago. My only recommendation of him is that I have never had nor seen any body-servant whose fidelity would bear a comparison with his. And this, too, is my only ground for asserting the superior value of this gift to you. I emphasize the *only* ground, because, to tell you the truth, this one gift—a golden one indeed—fidelity, begins and ends the list of our Nathan's accomplishments; since he is, first of all, deformed and furiously ugly; secondly, he is stone dumb, and is acquainted with only the most

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meagre sign-language; and, thirdly, he is endowed with positively nothing more than the merest animal wits (if the term isn't a contradiction) and I am convinced he was born this way.

I pause for a moment while you gasp away your astonishment, and read these lines over again, and fret with impatience to ask me ten questions of explanation. I answer all those questions at once by repeating what I said about the fidelity of Nathan. I have nothing but this to emphasize. I must add, too, that Nathan is becoming somewhat unfit to stay with me. He is growing old, and you know what a flying-camp life I and my "followers" live from year to year. I know he will have a quiet, comfortable home at your place near Ladysmith. Let me repeat once more that I am sure Nathan will be of the greatest value to you. And, indeed, if experience should prove anything to the contrary, do not hesitate to send Nathan back to me at once.

After all this followed some instructions, detailed with care, about sending to Ladysmith to receive Nathan when he arrived and escort him home. Then Meredith's letter ended abruptly; but this was not *quite* the end, for a postscript was added, containing only a line or two, and reading as follows :

By the way, if it should happen for any reason that you should grow so interested in Nathan that you would like to be informed about his birth and antecedents, write me, and, as soon as I can reach you by mail, I will let you have all the information you wish in that line — family history, lineage, pedigree, etc., etc.

Such was his letter. And it puzzled me quite a little. It was not the fact of his sending me one of his cast-off blacks. I knew he kept a perfect horde of these, who followed him on his long expeditions in the cause of his science, which was in the naturalist line — I might remark here that in the last few years, since the writing of this memoir, Sir Arthur's contributions have received very distinguished notice — but, as I say, it was not the sending me one of his swarthy followers that made me wonder. It was his making such a time over it. He might have settled it in a line and a half, and then gone on with a few scraps of news about himself — especially since his letters were such rare luxuries to me, — but to devote an entire letter for the purpose of telling me that he was sending me a withered, worn-out Ethiopian — that seemed rather strange. I thought I was through it all, however, after a little reflecting. This black had probably done him some remarkable service, saved his life, perhaps — which was not at all unlikely in the midst of snake-jungles and with frequent brushes with in-

land tribes. And now the faithful old fellow was growing old, and toothless, and Sir Arthur had some delicacy about letting him fall into any chance hands, and wanted to find a place where he could turn him loose to graze out his last few years in peace and with kind treatment. So Sir Arthur settled on me at my farm near Ladysmith. I didn't feel at all offended at this liberty. I was willing to take the old fellow and feed him and treat him kindly. But what I couldn't see was why Meredith did not speak out honestly, and say that all he wanted was to provide a quiet asylum for his old black, instead of regaling me with all this nonsense about sending me a present and so on.

Then when it came to that postscript, the mystery deepened for a moment. How in the name of everything civilized could I ever grow so interested in a black servant as to inquire about his pedigree ! Then the whole thing brightened into a joke. Meredith was making a little quiet game of me, from a safe distance in his solitary jungle camp. I tried to smile it off—but it did not entirely satisfy me, and I looked forward with some little curiosity to the arrival of this acquisition to my household.

I remember that I sent two of my fellows into Ladysmith next day, with full directions as to the taking charge of the invaluable Nathan. Meredith was sending in that month a large party of his followers to the Natal metropolis, as he did two or three times a year, to purchase supplies of all kinds for him, after which they would, by making an overland journey of some hundred and fifty miles, join him again in the interior. With this party Nathan was to arrive. It was not until evening—for they rested during the mid-day hours to escape the sun, that the ox-cart returned from town. I was taking supper alone on the veranda when one of the servants announced that the new man had arrived. I answered that I would be ready presently, and, after leisurely finishing my supper, I strolled over to the "quarters" to have a look at the new arrival. There he was standing at the entrance of one of the cabins, leaning rather lazily against the door post. The first thing about him that impressed me was his appearance of extreme age. I had expected a man, not in the bloom of youth (for his usefulness was supposed to have gone), but here was even a trifle more than I had looked for. He seemed literally crushed with the

weight of years. He was stooped so low that I think it would have been physically impossible for him to get down any lower and remain on the soles of his feet. Then his whole form gave me the strong impression of extreme shrunkenness. His wrists protruding from his sleeves were fleshless sticks, while his trousers flapped in a peculiar way, which made me feel painfully the thinness of his legs.

I smiled a little grimly to myself as I took in these details. "The value of Meredith's gift does not precisely dawn on me yet," I muttered. "As far as I can see, this old chap will have to be treated with gruel and a soft bed at once — while we get a cedar box ready for him in the near future. Why, he hasn't strength enough to pull a long breath."

As I drew quite near to him the old fellow raised his head. His face had been entirely hidden, partly by his broad-brimmed hat, which belongs to the outfit of a South African open-air negro, and partly by the inclination of his form which, as I said, was extreme, — but now I caught a fair look at it. And what a face! Meredith was certainly mild in merely calling him ugly. It was — well — the most hideous face I had ever seen. "Age has certainly used you up badly," I thought. The face seemed to be made up of wrinkles, like a piece of loose shrunken leather. But that wasn't the only disfigurement. Everything there was made in the worst possible way; the eyes were small and bearish; the nose was beaten flat; while the nostrils were large and for all the world like ugly bullet-holes. The mouth was very broad, with a protruding upper and lower jaw. But I can't describe him. I can only say he was certainly furiously ugly — inhumanly ugly!

I stood looking at him for a few seconds without manifesting any surprise, as the matter of his personal looks was a rather indifferent one to me. Then I endeavored to put on as cheerful a tone as I could, and said something about being glad to see him and that I hoped he would be satisfied here. At once I was reminded about his being dumb, and the possessor of the minimum of wits. He looked at me with the blankest possible stare, and merely gave me a kind of grunt — meaningless enough.

And then there happened what I could no more explain to myself at the time, than I could have flown with wings. As I stood,

with my eyes fixed upon the old black, a feeling of intense revulsion and disgust for him took hold of me so strong that it almost shook me with its vehemence. I am the most phlegmatic man in the world, and yet that feeling for a moment seemed to control me absolutely — the shrinking as well as the loathing inspired by that poor old deformed creature. I felt for a second as if I should in duty wipe him off from the face of the earth. I remember distinctly how my hand reached towards the heavy revolver which I carry at my side, and then how, as my folly flashed upon me, I tightened my belt to cover up the gesture. I did not stand debating long; but turned sharp on my heel and walked back to the house. As I walked, I began to ask myself (for I was calmer now) what it was about the old fright that made my gorge rise so. I found it hard, indeed, to explain. It was not, I was sure, that I saw treachery or villainy of any kind in him. No, it was nothing like that ! It was more like the feeling a man has when he is awakened in the jungle by having a slimy lizard crawl across his face and he stamps on the reptile to relieve his disgust. “Certainly you were never stirred up so before by mere bad looks,” I muttered to myself. My teeth were chattering with the shudder that was still on me.

That evening, as I sat in my study, my eye fell on Meredith’s letter, which lay on the table. Its connection with the day’s incident made me pick it up and read it over. When I came to the place where he emphasized the ugliness of his Nathan, I smiled and thought I saw rather far into his design. Meredith’s joke was to send me a black so ugly that I should be filled with the “creeps” at the sight of him, and then be forced to send him back after a siege of bad dreams. “And to think that he’s half succeeded already, — but I’ll play a little counter game,” I said.

Then I took up my pen and wrote a brief letter to Meredith, announcing the arrival of his gift, and remarking that he need not have spoken in so depreciatory a way about the old fellow’s looks, as I had often seen worse. I declared I was glad to have him, and would find some use for him. So this was the way in which Nathan began life on my South African farm. It was a tame beginning, but wait until you hear the end.

The next morning, as I sat at my late breakfast, I was rather

surprised to hear Sam, who always stood behind my chair, mutter something about Nathan. I turned and asked him what he had to say about him.

"Oh, nuthin', sir," he answered, "only you thought that Nathan he fit for no work. He doin' first-class work. Uncle Abe (that was my overseer) set him goin' with the hoe early this morning. That Nathan he got some go in him yit."

This roused me a little, because I suspected that they had acted a little high-handedly with the aged new-comer; and not liking to have him do nothing to earn his bread, had forced some work on him in spite of his weakness. I said no more; but after my breakfast, I sauntered over to the garden, as we called it, where there was about an acre and a half which we kept under cultivation and in which we raised fresh vegetables to supply the house. It was separated from the farm, and I generally detailed a special man, when I could spare one, to take care of it.

It was in one corner of this garden acre that I recognized my Nathan busily engaged in turning up the loose turf with a hoe. I approached him quietly, and whether he saw me or not he gave no sign whatever, but went ahead silently and steadily. It was somewhat fascinating to watch him, — the long, almost rhythmical swing with which he drew the hoe backwards and forwards, his body following the motion. But what made me almost start with surprise was the impression of strength which he conveyed, — the ease with which the instrument passed through the heavy clods, cutting them or throwing them aside — the accompanying swing of his body from the waist, all made me exclaim to myself that there was some suppleness and force left in that old, withered body. "Sam was right," I muttered, "there is some go in him yet. I will let them keep him at work for a time to see how he stands it." I did not remain there long watching. I had an all-morning business in the shape of a ride to a neighboring farm and back again in time for lunch.

When I returned, about noon, and as I rode in past the garden patch on my way to the stable, I saw a familiar figure standing in the furrows using his hoe with long, steady sweeps. I could not believe it at first. I shaded my eyes with my hand and looked sharp at it. Yes, it was certainly Nathan. I whistled, and Sam

ran out of the stable yard where he had been waiting for me. As he took my bridle I asked him, "Has Nathan been at that all the morning?"

"Yes, indeed, sir," answered Sam, "I declare I don't believe he has looked up once. I told you, sir, he got plenty of go left in him yet." This moved me considerably. I did not think about the endurance part of it. What struck me was the unselfish fidelity of the old fellow. All the hands used to stop at the end of two or three hours, take a drink, and wear away some time in chatting and lounging before going back to work; but for him to keep on steadily from early morning with not a pause, and on his first day, old and dried as he was!

Well, I just jumped down, let Sam take my horse while I walked straight over to Nathan, and laid my hand on the hoe, expressing as strongly as I could that he was to stop work for the present. He let go the tool like a child, and then stood there waiting for me to order him. He looked much more old and feeble again. His shoulders slouched forward, his back was bent,—of course he was tired, too, after a whole morning's work without a pause. I plucked him by the sleeve, motioning him to come with me. We made our way to the kitchen, where I called the cook and told him to bring some of the meat and vegetable porridge he was making. He brought some in a deep dish, which I set before Nathan. I then ran and got a loaf of wheat bread—the kind that was reserved for my use—and set that before him, too. He was still standing, so I forced him into a seat and pulled off his wide-brimmed straw hat, motioning him towards the eatables. He turned his ugly face up at me for a few moments, and then dropped down to the porridge.

And it was then—then, as the poor old hungry wretch bent over his food—that I felt the wave of that strong revulsion sweep over me again. It was awful. It seemed to reach down into the depths of me. I actually felt like seizing something heavy and coming down hard on the back of his neck—it was well exposed as he leaned over his bowl—and killing him like some unclean dog that you have found thieving in your house. I got out of the room as suddenly and speedily as I could, and almost shouted to myself in vexation, "What, in the name of reason, is the matter

with you?" But I couldn't begin to answer the question, or even state fairly to myself what I meant by it. I only know that four times I looked convulsively back over my shoulder, and my forehead was damp with sweat, and a peculiar chill ran down my spine. I kept muttering through my clenched teeth, "fool! fool!" but it was no use.

The spell did not last long, however, and it had passed off completely when I had reached my study and was settled down to work at my accounts — a long, tedious job. In fact, I was so disgusted with myself at being worked up — a rare occurrence with me — over nothing, that the whole matter left my mind entirely; and when Uncle Abe, my overseer, entered my room that evening with a troubled face, I never guessed for a moment what he wanted. But he came to the point at once.

"I want to speak to you, sir, about that new man, Nathan, I think his name. I declare, sir, I can't work when he's 'round. And the other men, they think the same way. They most determined, sir, and they all declare, sir, they leave at once if you ask 'em to work with him." For once I was knocked completely out of countenance by a servant. I stammered, "But, — but what's the matter with him, Abe? Do you think he's a bad man?" Here I noticed the slaty paleness of Abe's face and the suppressed quaver in his tone.

"'Tain't that, sir; 'deed I can't say what it is. But I never seed no signs o' bad in him. He's a very good steady worker — wonderful enduring for sich an ole man. But being that as it is, I can't stay near him, so I don't blame the others."

I sat for a few minutes without a word; but then I became suddenly ashamed of my perplexity in Abe's presence, and I dismissed him with a promise to do something the next day. When I was left alone with my own thought, my sense of the folly of it all came strongly back to me. And to think, too, that I shared in the folly of my ignorant black servants. How laughable it was!

I found a way out of the embarrassing part of the affair by determining to confine Nathan in his work to the garden acre, which was enough to keep him busy, and by assigning him to an isolated room in the quarters, where he could sleep. I assured myself that time and familiarity would make him more agreeable to his fel-

low-workers. "As to myself," I thought, "I'll always be kind to the old unfortunate. It seems bitterly hard to be isolated in that way on account of a face nature has given one."

And I always did treat him kindly. It made me warm towards him still more when I rode by his field every morning and saw him diligently and stoically bending to the swing of his long hoe. I would sometimes shout a greeting as I passed, trusting that he would divine from my tone what my intention was. Sometimes I brought some fruit back in my saddle-bags and I would toss him a ripe mango or two or a banana. But I never attempted any closer intercourse with him. The memory of my two severe experiences kept me at a distance; — and then there was something, *something*, about him which, though I constantly denied it to myself, made me breathe just a trifle freer when I was out of his sight and vicinity.

And so six weeks passed. It is strange when I think of it now — how at the end of those six weeks that old black had so constant a place in my thoughts. One reason for this, probably, was the pronounced aversion of the men for him, which I thought might decrease, but which, on the contrary, only seemed to grow stronger. Another explanation was, undoubtedly, the peculiar character of my position. There I was, a solitary old settler, with little outside my farm to interest or occupy me.

At any rate, the fact was I sat in my study at the end of the six weeks turning over the problem in my mind, and sifting it and sounding it and turning it over again for a solution. What was there about this poor harmless black that inspired the most intense disgust and aversion even in the rough negro laborers, who, at least here in South Africa, are not particularly delicate of feeling? They were certainly not so very far his superiors in the line of looks. But *was* it merely ill-looks that repelled him? Here I was brought sharply to a standstill, and the problem took a personal form. *Was it only his ill looks that repelled me?* I avoided answering my own question, and my eyes wandered hopelessly about the room, finding their way to the table at last where the letter from Meredith was still lying. Mechanically I opened it and read it again — the third time now — and when I came to the postscript at the end I thought I saw a faint hope of solution

for my difficulty. I sat down and penned a second letter to Meredith, in which I frankly confessed my mystification and begged for any information he had concerning the past history, pedigree or anything connected with Nathan that might possibly lead me to a solution of my problem. I sent the letter off the same day, which proves, if I should doubt it now, my impatience in the matter.

Then I remember I dreamed that night that Nathan was discovered to be the son of an ancient king who had ruled over one of those cities in the heart of Africa, the magnificent remains of which are the wonder of the explorer and the archæologist. He belonged to a distinct, a superior race; no wonder ordinary men were out of sympathy with him, were repelled from him. Only his race must have been one in which the type of beauty was different, radically different, from any yet discovered. This I remarked to myself as I pondered seriously on my dream.

Here I ought to begin a new chapter because I have to talk now in so different a strain. You have heard of nothing so far but of peace, and the sleepest kind of peace it was, without a ripple to disturb its serenity, nor anything on the horizon in which one could read the indication of even a light blow. But now, of a sudden, there came rumors of war, dark ominous rumors, to disturb the evenness of our placid, lazy life.

The government of South Africa was on the very verge of trouble with the Zulus. An outbreak was looked for at any time.

I wonder whether any one who has not lived in South Africa knows what Zulu means. You will say he is nothing more nor less than a species of negro savage who wears very little clothes, carries a shield and an assegai in battle. But did you know that this negro savage has qualities which place him on a level with the most splendid civilized troops that the world can show? Much has been said about the valor and efficiency of the British infantry man. Without questioning this, let me offer it as my opinion that a single Zulu, with his bare hands, is a match for three of these British infantry men armed with rifle and bayonet,—let him but get within hand-grip of them. For he'll take their bullets into his body and still have strength and vitality enough left to dash their heads together and smash them like egg-shells.

And as for cool, restrained courage, I have only to call up that memorable picture of the awful fight at Isandhlwana, when up against those English lines advanced the crescent-shaped column of King Cettiwayo's warriors, dense, silent, each man (with the exception of a few inefficiently armed with muskets) bearing no other weapons but the long ox-hide shield on his arm, and in his right hand the fearful short-stabbing assegai. No way of striking at a distance, no way of silencing the enemy's deadly fire until they had him within arm's length of that dreadful spear. History tells, I say, how that brown, silent column advanced that day; how the English, in the fever of desperation, poured their withering volleys, mingled with charges of grape, into that line and tore great gaps in it; and how the warriors closed them with a calmness and steadiness that Europe's best infantry have often failed to show, and pressed forward slowly, silently, without a cheer, without a sound, up to the very muzzles of the guns and then—history tells, too, of the awful end of that gallant British regiment when the Zulu assegai had done its work and had its vengeance. But this is only a little amplification of what the term Zulu means to one who has lived in the South of Africa or has studied a little of its history.

Well, as I was saying, or started to say, it was about this time that rumors began to be current of trouble between the Cape Colony authorities and King Cettiwayo, and no one would have been surprised any day to hear of an open collision, we knew so well the temper of the two parties. For myself, the rumors never bothered me much, first, because I was extremely lazy and my whole nature resisted being worked up over anything; and, secondly, because I did not feel that even in the event of war there was any grave danger to me or my dependents. It is true my place was within easy reach of any wandering band of marauders, but they would have little reason for harming us. There was little, too, here in the way of plunder. And then I had always kept on very good terms with the Undi, when they passed on their way to Cape Town with their guns and ivory and what not. I had even frequently fed them, and housed them over night in the quarters. All this reassured me, but, as I realized afterwards, I left out of my calculation Zulu hate and Zulu vengeance, which,

when they are once roused, are — well, they're worth an epic to commemorate them. They stop at nothing this side of "profoundest hell."

For the next week rumors and reports were thick and menacing. People found very little else to talk about. We heard of the mustering of angry tribesmen in the North, then of a regiment being sent from Cape Town with orders to deal severely with anything rebellious. And then the scare took hold of the country people and most of them moved into the protection of the city, while I remained stolidly where I was. But I have only a confused recollection of all that happened at that time. It is always hard to remember what happened before a great event, when one has lived through the event itself and is filled with the memory of it.

I never shall forget, however, as long as I live, that night of the 23d of January, which we afterwards learned was the day following the terrible tragedy of Isandhlwana. I was sitting in the veranda reading quietly when I heard the sound of footsteps in quick succession on the garden path. Some one was running hard. I looked up and saw a negro lad making his way towards the house at the very top of his speed. I never saw a face so convulsed with fear. His eyes were literally standing out of their sockets and his mouth was wide open. He reached my side in a moment, but he could not utter a single word for terror. He could only gasp and work his face in agony, and point furiously in the direction from which he had come. I knew he must have meant the approach of Zulus, but my first impulse was to take the news calmly. It was so easy to frighten a boy and there could really be very little to fear.

As I stood there some one stepped up and drew the trembling, paralyzed lad into the house, and at that moment I heard a new sound — a dull, penetrating sound. It was the heavy, rhythmical tramp of feet. And following up the origin of the sound with my eyes I saw, just at the turn of the road where it came into view of the house, the gleam of bright head feathers and then a line of swarthy faces looking over the tops of great oblong yellow shields. They were Undi, and that loping trot would bring them close up in a minute or two. Still I did not feel any fear; there

was no reason. Even when they entered my gate and marched down the length of my garden in a broad column ten-abreast (there were not more than twenty or twenty-five in their party) and tramped rather ruthlessly on my flower-beds, — even then my only thought was impatience to reprimand these clowns spoiling my flowers with stupid marching tactics. I leaped to my feet and shouted in bad Zulu, but as emphatically as I could, that they should “mind where they marched,” and be more careful of my property if they wanted any favor of me. Just then one of my negroes ran in front of the column and shouted something at them, waving his arms as if to wave them back. As he stood there in the path of the advancing line, one of the Zulus, a tremendous fellow, stepped forward, in advance of the rank, and like a flash, he struck my servant a blow with his assegai just between the shoulder and the breast. It was a fearful downward stroke, enough to rip the body open to the waist. Down went the poor man like a log and the column passed over him without a sound. And now along that dark line of faces my eye seemed to see at last the hateful gleam of murder.

I was not dazed; I was not sickened. For the moment a frenzy seized me; all the dormant activity in my nature was roused into maddened life. I rushed to the corner behind the door where I kept my heavy martini rifle loaded and ready for “big game.” I caught up the gun and fired into the middle of the brown column, now close upon the house. I could see at once the hole punched in one of the yellow shields (a martini bullet makes nothing of ox-hide) and the shield was lowered and there was the red wound in the throat of the fiend behind the shield, who came on a few paces and then dropped down, first on his knees and then flat forward on his face, while the blood gushed out of his mouth at every gasp. The big fellow who stood next to him — perhaps his brother — reached the top step of the veranda at two bounds. I clubbed my rifle and struck at him savagely — my blood on fire with frenzy — and he, with ease, it seemed to me, swept back the piece in my face with his heavy shield and beat me to the floor like a nine-pin, my head striking hard against the base of the door post.

I was stunned, but not senseless, and I held my breath to feel

the brute bending over me and tearing out my very heart with a stab of his assegai; when suddenly, out from the open door, a form flashed by me. It was more like the nervous spring of a hound than the bound of a man; and the next instant I saw two withered hands close over the great, corded neck of the dusky giant above me. And he — he was six feet ten if he was an inch — he went back as if a thunder-bolt had struck him full in the face. Crash ! he came down on the broad of his back — the whole porch trembled with the shock; and when I saw his face, over the shoulder of his assailant, it was purple, and the tongue was protruding its full length; and I saw the assegai fall from his right hand as the hand opened and the fingers stiffened like chilled wax.

Now I was dazed; I scarcely knew whether I saw or felt. But those black scoundrels behind were on hand at once. They swarmed up the steps and two of them, with one motion, buried their short spears in that form that had its hands fixed in the throat of their companion. I gave a loud groan of agony, as if it was I that had been stabbed, but I caught my breath the next instant. For I saw my Nathan — yes, it was he; I knew him at once by his long arms and the stoop of his body — I saw him whom I thought to be a poor, withered, decrepit old man, turn and seize the rifle that I had dropped and strike with it — oh, heavens ! the lightning speed of that blow ! — strike and spring full at the crowd of dusky giants with his dreadful club. Then all was whirling and half confusion, but I saw Nathan strike, as it seemed, everywhere at once. I never would have believed that such strength and speed were ever given to a mortal arm. I saw one man throw up his shield and saw it beaten down — the iron arm of a Zulu beaten down like a child's — and his brains dashed out as if his skull were made of paper. Then all was a whirl once more, but I remember counting five distinct shocks of men falling, which made the floor shake under me.

Then I saw what few men in the world have ever seen. I saw a band of Zulus retreating from battle, skulking away with terror written on their faces — many of them spattered with blood. They kept their faces turned towards the house as if they did not dare to turn their backs on that single enemy. While there on the top step of the porch, with the rifle now twisted out of all shape,

grasped by the barrel in the right hand, stood Nathan. His back was turned to me; he was quivering from head to foot, as if with the violence of the passion that had taken hold of him, — and out of the depths of him somewhere came a sound, a most peculiar sound which I can only liken to a kind of deep, snarling growl.

And it was then at that moment — so help me, heaven — as I lay there stunned and wounded, that my whole being once more was fired with disgust and loathing for that poor black servant. There may have been some fear mingled with it now, as he stood there in his strange might; but it was mostly fierce, loathing hate. I am absolutely certain that if I had had my revolver in my belt, and energy and strength to draw it, I would have shot him in the back where he stood. Witness it! And yet his own blood that he had shed for me was still warm on the ground. I remember how the mad wish almost found expression in words — that the Zulus would turn back and overpower him and tear him to pieces before my eyes.

But I saw there was little chance of this as I looked beyond to the retreating remnant of my enemies. They were still backing away silently, as if they could not even bear the eye of this dreadful being who stood unmoved glaring at them. Farther and farther they went. They had passed out of the garden gate and reached the road beyond. Then I saw no more, for a torpor, whether from exhaustion or mere reaction, settled heavily upon me, and my sense left me.

When I opened my eyes again I became lazily conscious that I had not stirred from the place where I had fallen. I could look down the length of the garden. There was not a sign of a Zulu now, — though lying stark and ghastly about the steps of the veranda were a number of huge forms with marks of fearful wounds upon them. And there, on the top step of the porch, I saw a form that I knew well. It was Nathan's form. He was no longer standing erect, as when I saw him last, facing the cowering band of Zulus; he was lying on one side, not flat, but half supported by his arm. His eyes were only half closed, but as I looked they seemed to be closing still more, as though the same languor that held me were laying hold on him; and beneath him and around him I could see a great pool of dark-colored blood. The realization

of things seemed to come home to me, and yet I felt strangely indifferent. I realized that Nathan was badly wounded, that he was bleeding to death; and yet I felt no impulse to extend him aid. I am sure, of course, that the half-insensible state in which I lay took away my energy, and that I can lay much of the blame of my listlessness on that. But, but — well, let it pass !

I had not lain in this state for more than a moment, when, borne to my ears from the road, came once more the sound of the tramp of feet; but my ears could make out at once the difference from the Zulu tread. It had more ring and precision, and if one listened carefully he could catch the peculiar jingling made by a body of men marching with accoutrements.

I was about to cry out as loud as my wasted strength would let me, to notify the household that help was near, when my attention was attracted again to Nathan. He had heard the sound, for his eyes were open wide now and a strange gleam was in them which I had never seen before. I realized keenly the terrific effort that he made as he knelt upright; and then stooped and seized one end of the twisted and battered rifle near him and then, with another great effort, staggered to his feet and faced away from me toward the path that led in from the garden gate. As he stood there I noticed that strange quivering seize his entire body, and I heard for a moment, though much fainter now, that same deep, muttering growl. But it was only a moment that he stood there. He began almost at once to sway from side to side and I did not reach a hand to hold him; then his legs seemed to give way under him and he sank, rather than fell, down to the floor of the veranda and lay quite still. And I knew, even from where I was, from the awkward, rigid sprawl in which he lay, that life had gone out of him.

Redcoats now appeared at the garden gate, and the flash of the sunlight reached my eyes from bayonets and gun barrels. But it didn't affect me much. I had not even strength or energy to stand up and welcome them and thank them. I simply lay there half dozing, half awake; and soon I was conscious of the rumble of a multitude of heels on the porch around me. Two figures bent over me and half lifted me, and I could feel one passing his hands over me gently in examination. Then I heard a voice say, "You're

pretty badly used up, though it might easily be worse, — a nasty gash in the back of the head, and arm broken above the elbow and dislocated at the shoulder. But you've certainly left your mark on these copper devils. How, in the name of sense, you ever managed to mash so many of them single-handed is more than I can possibly guess." Then I heard him mutter something to some one, and a flask was pressed to my lips. I drank some of the liquor and while I was drinking I heard some one shout rather gruffly, "We can bury them all in one pit over by the fence." This roused me more than the brandy, but it seemed that it was not myself but my reason that took voice in me, and cried out, as I pointed to one body that I knew by its position, "He is to be buried alone, and mark the place." Then while the surgeon — he whose voice I had heard — was working over me, as he began at once to do, the thought came to me that perhaps I had not made myself clear, so I spoke out once more. "He saved my life," pointing to the body of my old servant.

It brought a vigorous "hush" from the surgeon; then he added that they would understand, and that my duty now was to keep quiet. He worked over me quickly and deftly, bandaged my head, lifted my shoulder back into place with a few twinges, and set the broken arm in splints. Then he called for two men with a stretcher and ordered me to be taken to my room. "He'll be on his feet in a day or two, if I'm not mistaken," were his last words. They carried me there gently, two of my blacks, including Sam, and put me to bed. With another dose of something warming I was soon fast asleep.

The next morning I felt almost as good as new — for what is a broken arm and a mere flesh-wound in the head to a healthy outdoor man? I was even well enough to make them dress me and prop me up on my lounge. But if my bodily state was righting and mending, my mental condition was a sadly disordered one. I never was besieged — cruelly besieged — by such a confused array of mental questions, each one clamorous and persecuting.

My position was such a difficult one to define to myself. Surely, from the events lately transpired, I should be a grateful man. But did I feel any gratitude? Was I then basely ungrateful? Of what precisely *had* I to accuse myself? What had I

done? What should I do? What should I feel? Had I been in a reliably sane state of mind for the last six weeks and suffering from no chronic hallucination of any kind? And then, out of all the questions, as if resolved out of them all uniting them like a great climax chorus, came the question :—What, in the name of all mystery, was the solution of that problem which that poor black fright carried about with him and which lay with him in the grave, but still unsolved? Then came the realization—however I might grind my teeth and resist it—that it was a relief, a soothing relief, to think that he was dead—dead and under the ground with four feet of heavy clay soil on top of him.

The last voice, however, in my reflections was that of memory which calmly reminded me that he had saved my life. This was a simple fact. I spoke to Sam on the first opportunity and asked him whether the soldiers had obeyed my directions and marked the place where they had buried Nathan. He said that they had, and had made it very plain with a piece of whitened board. I then told him that I was going to make it much plainer with a slab of white stone—marble, if I could—to be set up at the head of the mound; and I gave him orders at once to see about having the stone procured in town by the next two men who went in with the ox-cart. What else, in reason, could I do?

Two days after that the stone arrived, and I was sufficiently well to walk down and watch them set it up. The little yellow mound was in sight of my bedroom window. As I passed out my door, Sam met me and held out a letter to me. I knew the writing at a glance. It was Sir Arthur Meredith's. And it startled me, too, and made my hand shake a little with eagerness, for I remembered that my last letter had been to ask him for information about Nathan—mysterious Nathan—who was now lying over there under the clay mound.

But what was it that made me, as my eye glanced over the written page, start as if some one had struck me, and cry aloud—so loud that the whole house must have heard me, and stamp furiously on the ground, in spite of the twinge it gave my shoulder, and then walk quickly up and down as an outlet for my excitement; then catch up the letter which I had dropped, and read it again as if I could not make sure that my eyes read aright? Never,

never shall I forget the shock of that letter — never did a few lines of news so literally nearly take a man off his feet! I could scarcely stand. I did not feel at all sure whether I was standing or lying down, awake or dreaming.

But here is the letter. I give it in full. It is very short and does not need synopsising :

MY DEAR SHERWOOD :

Your letter reached me on the 15th. It is by the merest chance that it caught me in civilization so that I am able to send you back an answer that will reach you promptly. I could not help smiling when I read the inquiry which makes up the body of your letter. So you really have not found out my secret, but have lived so long deceived? You ask about the connections, etc., of Nathan, who has evidently, in spite of bad looks, won a way into your particular favor. Did you not know that for eight weeks you have been housing and employing not a man but a Simian — nothing more nor less than a specimen of anthropoid (*Troglodytus Gorilla*) — indeed, one of the most remarkable ones I ever happened upon? It is rather a bold joke for a naturalist to play,— but you have been uncommonly gullible. You will ask me a number of questions about the execution of the whole affair in detail and they will be more easily answered than explained. I can only say that, in addition to his unusually human appearance, for an ape, Nathan added a high degree of tractability, and this, together with a large expenditure of patience and some skill on my part, accounts for it all. I had to use some rather cruel measures, such as the administration of the searing iron, to remove tell-tale hair. Then Nathan had to be fitted with a skin-tight wig, to give the impression of a crop of approved Ethiopian wool. But it was all comparatively easy. The only real labor, which I made a pastime of, was the training, which took me about two years and a half; and you see what fruit it has borne. This is all. Excuse my deep-laid, practical joke, which you now can enjoy with me. You will find some use, I am sure, in that big country of yours, for poor, old, fallen Nathan, even if it be but to keep him for a curiosity. Goodbye to you. We leave here tomorrow for the Upper Nile. I am always, etc.,

ARTHUR MEREDITH.

This was Meredith's letter. After I had read it over the third time I grew more calm and sank into a large arm-chair, and began to think of all manner of things. The thoughts crowded very thick, one after the other, so that I could hardly get a sight of one at a time.

I heard the noise of voices outside, and I remembered that some of my fellows were at work putting up the stone. This brought me to myself and I realized, in a half-determined sort of way, that I should go out and put a stop to their work and make them carry the slab away. I even rose with this thought in my

mind, and walked to the door. They could easily hear me if I called from the threshold. But as I stood there, with the orders just on my lips, a scene of a few days before came back to me.

I see right before me, on the top step of the porch, an old, withered form lying in a broad pool of blood, and scattered close about are the huge bodies of my would-be murderers. And then, at the sound of feet in the distance, which marked, as he thought, the approach of more of my enemies, I see that form drag itself to its feet, grasp a battered gun-barrel and, in the very act and effort of placing himself between me and the coming danger, fall down dead before my eyes.

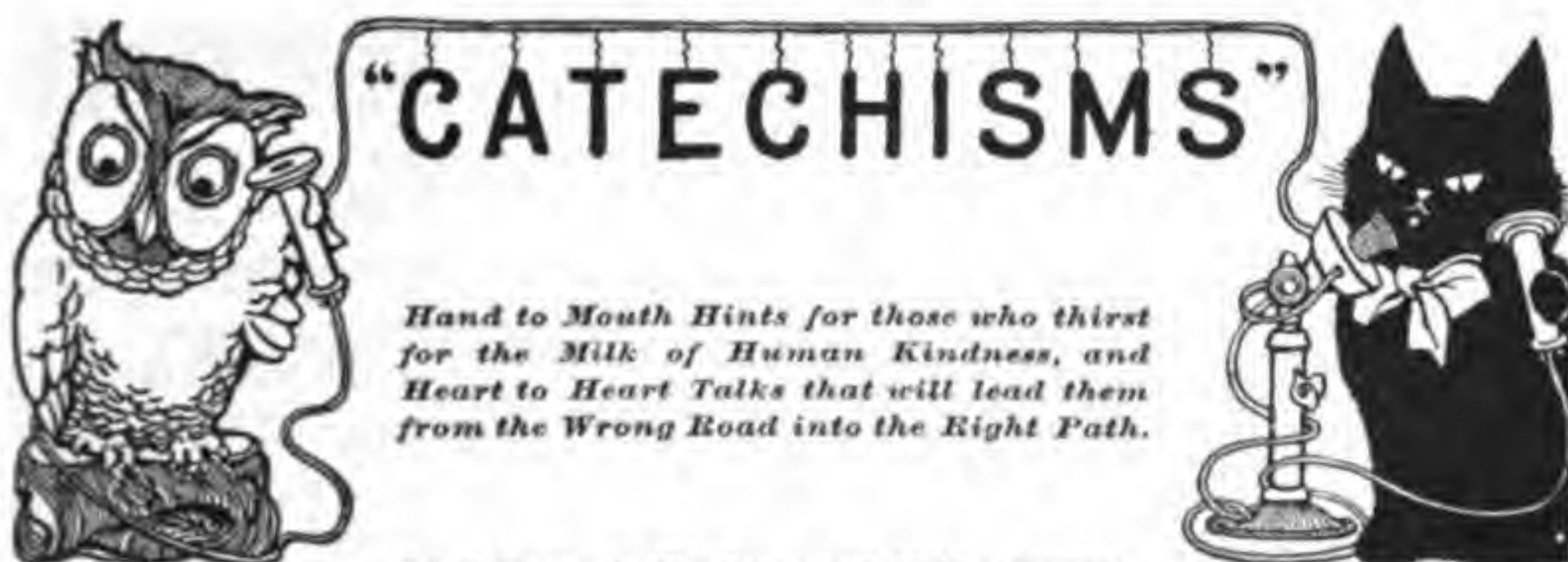
I turned and walked back into the house. "They can leave the stone where it is," I muttered, "I will never stir it."

And I never have stirred it. Sometimes (quite often, indeed), I walk down and read the inscription on it. The inscription is this :

Here lies NATHAN Who died to save his Master
--

Surely there is no harm in that, and I have not done wrong in leaving it there.





When, where, and by whom was the turning over of a new leaf first accomplished? LULU.

1. On the Eve of the year one. 2. Under a fig tree. 3. Adam.

To decide a wager will you please state whether anywhere in history or poetry it is recorded that Clay, Honey, and Poison enter into the make-up of woman and if so what, if anything, the Devil had to do with it? MELVILLE.

It is a historical fact that a famous Persian poet wrote:—In the beginning Allah took a rose, a lily, a dove, a serpent, a little honey, a Dead Sea apple, and a handful of clay. When he looked at the amalgam it was woman. He decided to make a change. But it was too late as Adam had taken her for his wife. And here is where Satan stepped in and pointed out that the rose had a thorn; the lily was fragile; the dove was timid; the serpent retained its guile, fangs, and venom; the honey clogged; the Dead Sea apple was filled with dust, and the clay was tough, difficult to blend, and impossible to eliminate.

In the best society what do guests at leading Metropolitan hotels usually order for breakfast? As I have never been away from home and am going to New York on my bridal tour I shall appreciate any helpful hint. I am eighteen and my health is good. FLOSSIE.

That depends. Should the hotel at which you stop be conducted on the European plan you will write out this order:—Coffee, Rolls, and Boiled Eggs. If, on the other hand, the American plan obtains, ask the waiter to bring you the following:—

Hot House Grapes	Blood Oranges
Oatmeal—Cream	
Bread	Rolls
Corn Muffins	Scones
Chocolate	
Broiled Salmon	Creamed Potatoes
Omelet with Mushrooms	
Porterhouse Steak—Grilled Sweet Potatoes	
HOT WAFFLES—MAPLE SYRUP	

If your health is *very* good, a Jumbo Squab on toast may precede the steak. Take the oranges to your room.

What is Poetic License anyway? EVALINA.

The assumption on the part of heart hungry poets like Byron that long haired men of letters may monkey with matrimony without a license.

Will you please state whether the streets of New York were ever immortalized by a poet and if so how?

Yes, by the lines:

"Your streets are not passable —
Not even Jackassable."

Please give a beautiful example of selfish and unselfish love?

CATHERINE.

"There was once a man who loved a woman. He gave her everything he possessed, even his soul. Still unsatisfied, she said to him, 'I want the heart of your mother: bring it to me.' He did as directed, and running back to her, stumbled and fell. As the heart rolled in the dust it cried out in pain, 'Did'st hurt thyself, my son?'"

Where, when and by whom was the best throw with a boomerang made? And what was the record? DIANA.

In Australia. During the visit of the American fleet. By King Boorakula of Northern Queensland. Being refused a drink by a Boomanoomana Publican His Highness stepped into the street and after carefully examining his boomerang sent it on its flight. The curiously carved weapon circled the hotel three times, crashed through the front entrance, knocked seventeen bottles from the shelves, blackened the Publican's eye, passed through the rear window, killed a laughing Jackass on its flight to the harbor, where it encircled the entire fleet and came to grief only when, on its return trip, it essayed to round up a merry widow hat in the conning tower of the Flagship.

In the best society which is correct:

The artist's model as she appears to the naked eye

or

The artist's model as she appears to the eye naked? ROSALIND.

That depends altogether on the altogether.



The Hypnotized Ship.*

BY EDWARD TH. CALNON.



HE ink was scarcely dry on his commission as a surgeon in the Portuguese navy when Dr. Jacob Willow was assigned to the cruiser *Castello Branco*, ordered to sail from Lisbon two days later. The night before her departure a small party was sent ashore to gather in a half-dozen seamen who had not returned to the ship. The Doctor joined the expedition through curiosity. On landing, a certain waterside tavern much frequented by seafaring men was visited, and it was here that he first saw Shirzahmeda.

He sat at a table before the tavern door. A flaming link stuck into an iron sconce above the entrance cast a dim and fitful light upon the "Man with Satan's Eyes," as the inn people had dubbed him. He sat on the edge of the chair in a peculiar, crouching attitude with his body huddled upon the table and his face buried in his arms. His hair was long and black. A pair of Turkish trousers showing below his Spanish cloak aroused the Doctor's curiosity to such an extent that he taxed the landlord for an account of his mysterious guest.

The innkeeper averred that he knew nothing, and, indeed, seemed fearful of even naming the bizarre stranger who had camped before his door. But as his questioner persisted, and any hope of present trade had passed with the naval party, which had gone on without the surgeon, he led Dr. Willow into a far corner of the public room of the inn.

"Always he sits like that," whispered the innkeeper with a jerk of his thumb toward the tousled form dimly seen through the open door. "But he is not asleep. Ah, no! He listens. He hears everything. He likes especially the talk of sailors. When men from ships come here to eat and drink he harkens to their every

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word. His form grows stiff and stays that way until the talking stops. He is all ears when they tell of storms and wrecks, of how to guide the ship through mountainous waves and roaring winds, of compasses and wheels, of currents that run in the sea, of icebergs and terrible cold, of parts of the ocean where it is always hot and it blisters the hands to lay them where the sun has shone. But, senhor, best of all he likes to hear them speak of India. You should see him when they tell of Bombay, Calcutta, the Ganges! Then he is not stiff like a statue in bronze. No! No! His body quivers underneath his cloak. He is like a tiger about to spring, but he holds himself in and keeps his place.

"Whence did he come? Where will he go? Why does he stay here?" The keeper of the inn shrugged his shoulders. "He is plotting, scheming, senhor, but what it is that he plots no man knows. Some monstrous mischief, doubtless.

"The devil is in his eyes, senhor, and that is why men fear him. When his eyes blaze full upon them like a lightning flash, men stand like posts, stupefied, or fall upon the ground, and when his gaze meets yours you must do his will. When he is hungry or thirsty he looks up, and if my wife or the maid fall under his sight they must run to him with bread and wine. But, unless he is hungry, he sits as now, with his eyes hid. But some day, when his plot is ripe, what terrible things may happen, senhor!"

As the innkeeper ended he cast toward his awful visitor a sidelong glance in which was a nameless fear.

The hour being late, Dr. Willow left the inn and hastened down the street. He looked back as he turned the first corner and Shirzahmeda was still there, a grotesque form that seemed to expand and contract fantastically as the flame of the link flared up for an instant and then left him in temporary darkness.

Next day the *Castello Branco* sailed westward from Lisbon, and about two months later was steaming eastward from the coast of Brazil, bound for Portugal, with orders to stop at the Azores.

The voyage had been particularly pleasant. All on board were in a jolly mood. The gay spirits of the commander, Capitão Oliveira Corvo, undoubtedly had much to do with the prevailing good humor. This officer, a sunbrowned and handsome man of forty years or thereabout, was overjoyed at the prospect of visiting

the Azores. It was no secret among the officers that Capitão Corvo was deeply enamored of Portugal's richest heiress, Doña Maria Chagas, daughter of Dom Luis Chagas. The private yacht of the Dom, bearing the Doña Maria, was to arrive at the Azores a few days before he was due there. The Doña Maria was not averse to the Capitão's suit, it was rumored, but her aristocratic father had more ambitious aims for her future.

Affairs were in this delightful but uncertain state when, on a bright August morning, word went round that a ship was coming into view. In a few minutes the cruiser's decks, rails, and lower riggings were crowded with officers and men, all gazing intently at the strangest craft that ever skimmed the sea.

It was a trim little vessel of some fifty tons. Not a sail was set. No smoke curled from her funnel. Nothing moved upon her decks. Her sharp prow cut the waves like a knife. She was headed due south, a course that would bring her across the cruiser's bows.

Suddenly an ensign, with glasses trimmed upon the mysterious craft, was heard to cry: "I know that ship! It is the yacht *Flora da Angra*, of Lisbon!"

The lines about the commander's mouth grew tense and hard. His glasses, too, were leveled at the swiftly moving vessel.

"Yes," he said, in a voice almost like a groan. "It is Dom Luis Chagas' yacht. What evil has befallen her? She is far out of her course, and to be in these waters now she can not have touched at the Azores for even an hour. But look, there are people aboard her! I see them sitting in chairs upon the deck. I see the captain on the bridge. I see sailors standing about. But they are all as motionless as statues, as still as death!"

Indeed, it could be seen with the naked eye that all the Capitão said was true. The two vessels rapidly neared each other. The yacht held to her course and slipped by under the *Castello's* bows not half a cable length away.

As the *Flora da Angra* dashed by a strange silence, as of profound awe, fell upon the other ship. What evil force held the yacht in thrall and cast its spell upon her passengers? Seated in chairs, in groups and singly, about her after-deck, were Dom Luis, his daughter and friends. Not a hand was lifted to greet the war

vessel — not a head turned to view it. The captain stood upon the bridge, his hands grasping a rail and his face set immovably toward the south. Sailors leaned upon the bulwarks or stood with hands upon the shrouds or companionway railings. It seemed as though a strange reversal of the laws of nature had overtaken the ill-fated craft. The yacht sped swiftly on her way, rising and falling gently on the waves, as though it were a thing of flesh and blood, full of life and strength. The people alone seemed inanimate, standing in their places as dull and lifeless as stones or the dead stumps of blasted trees.

Capitão Corvo was the first to arouse himself. He saw his inamorata being borne swiftly and surely toward the trackless wastes of the South Atlantic.

“They must be stopped,” he shouted. “Some monstrous lethargy has fallen upon them. He must awaken them. We must attract their attention.”

Thereupon arose a thunderous din. Officers and sailors sent up mighty shouts and waved their arms frantically toward the yacht. Steam whistles rent the air with piercing shrieks. A starboard cannon boomed out a deafening note and a shell ricocheted across the path of the *Flora da Angra*.

A baby's sigh could have accomplished as much as all that hubbub. Those on the yacht whose backs were toward the cruiser never turned or moved. Those who faced it continued to stare with stolid indifference. The lethean sleep which had fallen upon them, if such it were, was a deep and appalling one.

The cruiser's commander saw his beloved snatched from him and hurried by some unseen agency to a lonely and dreadful death. He ordered the ship turned in pursuit of the yacht and began the most curious race in which vessels ever participated.

A hasty consultation of officers was held and it was decided to keep up the chase until the mystery was solved. Capitão Corvo took the responsibility of ignoring his orders to proceed to the Azores. He trusted that the importance of Dom Luis Chagas to his country would outweigh any technical disobedience.

“What is the speed of the *Flora da Angra*?” asked the Capitão of the ensign who had sailed in her.

“She makes her fifteen knots an hour easily,” was the reply.

"And we make our fifteen knots an hour hardly," was the bitter comment of a sub-officer.

The odds were in favor of the yacht, now half a mile ahead, with the cruiser plunging along at top speed in her wake.

By nightfall the *Flora da Angra* was two miles in the lead. She showed no lights but, as there was no indication of any change of course, it was decided to keep up the chase at full speed through the night, trusting to luck and a force of sharp-eyed lookouts not to run down the pleasure craft in the dark.

Before daybreak next morning the war vessel's decks were crowded with seamen. The Capitão paced to and fro, in misery and anxiety. What would the dawn disclose? Had the yacht changed her course during the night and so eluded pursuit? The vision of a sea that reached away on every side, empty, lonely, without a sign of any ship, rose up before him with maddening frequency.

The dawn came. While the waters of the ocean were yet dark and only the sky was gray the cry of "Ship ahoy!" rang out.

"Where away?" called an officer.

"Dead ahead," shouted the lookout.

Dead ahead all eyes were turned and there, one after another, the watchers made out a vessel. It was the *Flora da Angra*. She was about three miles distant, still headed for the south pole, and going at top speed.

Thus the race continued, day after day and night after night. Each evening found the yacht farther away than before.

On the morning of the fourth day consternation reigned on board the cruiser. There were no people on the *Flora da Angra*! Owners, sailors, guests—all had vanished from the places where they had been seen sitting or standing day after day. There had been half a gale during the night and a sea, that caused the yacht to dip and roll, was running. Had the passengers been swept off the deck of the *Flora da Angra* during the storm in the night?

Horrible thought! The distracted naval commander was almost crazed at the mere suggestion of such a catastrophe. But still he hoped, though half convinced that the cause of the craft's

sinister course was something really diabolical. And then he would swear, both long and loud, with every outlandish oath and direful curse that he had ever heard — in Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English — that he would follow that ship to the gates of hell and there engage in a hand-to-hand conflict with Satan himself, if he it were who had stolen his lady-love.

On the fifth and sixth days the yacht was scarcely visible. On the seventh day it was not once seen and the commander's state of mind was dolorous indeed.

Were Dom Luis Chagas and his most lovely, charming and gracious daughter aboard the yacht, or did they lie on coral strands fathoms down under the sea? And if on the *Flora da Angra*, were they alive or dead? And what would be the fate of the yacht? The cruiser was now in the Antarctic. The air was biting cold, and icebergs alarmingly numerous. Would the yacht strike one of these and sink before it could be reached? Would she continue due south, or turn to east or west? Should the pursuer still keep her course or change it? And was it really a ship, or merely a phantom, that it pursued?

Thus Capitão Corvo raved all day while the *Castello Branco* raced toward the southern horizon, over which the yacht had disappeared.

On the eighth day, an hour after sunrise, the *Castello* again caught sight of the *Flora da Angra*. She lay due south, some fifteen miles away. Covered with new fallen snow, she seemed more of an apparition than ever. All in white, her cutlines showed the same as on the first day she was sighted. For, strangest of all, her bow no longer pointed south, but east!

Capitão Corvo hastily gave orders to change the course so as to overhaul her. Then the yacht was seen to be turning north — she was coming toward the cruiser, which veered quickly toward the south again, but no sooner had this been done than the yacht headed west. The bewildered Portuguese commander was about to order another change of course when a voice sang out from the foretopmast: "She is going in a circle!"

At once it was seen that this must be so. The yacht was running about in a great ring, several miles across. This explained how her pursuer had been able to come up with her.

Swiftly the warship drew near its quarry. When but half a mile from the northernmost point of the yacht's circular course the engines were stopped and the *Castello Branco* drifted on the sea, and for two long hours watched the *Flora da Angra* as she dashed the icy spray from her bow and rushed headlong on a path that could lead nowhere. Some in wonder, some in awe, and some in very fear, all gazed in fascination upon that fairy ship. Hull and deck and masts, bowsprit and shrouds and ropes, all gleamed in the dazzling whiteness of snow and rime and frost. And when the sun broke through the clouds the whole yacht sparkled and scintillated as though made of millions of diamonds, pearls, opals and lapis-lazuli.

But the weirdest thing of all was to see this spectral ship gliding through the water with no human being to be seen on board of her. No passengers, no sailors, walked or stood about her decks — no lookout peered ahead for any sign of danger.

And as they gazed, on a sudden it seemed as though her speed grew less. Then twenty voices shouted: "She is slowing down!"

It was true. Slower and slower ran the yacht, until her motion was scarcely perceptible. Then she stopped altogether and rocked idly on the waves. "What has happened?" ran the question from one to another in terrified whispers.

"She has run out of coal!" sang out the ensign who had sailed in the yacht.

This material view from one who had walked her decks and climbed her rigging and knew the *Flora da Angra* for a bonafide structure of timber and iron put heart into all and the unaccountable flight of the yacht lost some of its magic.

So when a long-boat was lowered in charge of a gray-haired naval lieutenant it was quickly filled with sailors, armed to the teeth, all anxious to board the *Flora da Angra* and face and conquer whatever mysterious agency held it in its spell. Dr. Willow went along to care for any sick or injured who might be on the yacht, with very particular instructions from Capitão Corvo to have an eye especially for a rarely beauteous damsel whom he could not mistake, and also for her most estimable parent.

The approach to the *Flora da Angra* was made with little

noise and much caution, but apparently attracted no attention on board the yacht. The boat came alongside of her amidships and made fast to her without accident.

One by one the boat's crew silently clambered aboard and looked about. All was as still as death. No sign of man was anywhere — no footprints in the snow upon her decks.

Resolutely they dashed to the companionway and into the saloon. The first to enter stopped short in horror. Those behind pushed forward and shoved them farther into the cabin.

For a full minute all stood there, still and breathless, shocked into silence. They were crowded into a narrow aisle, which ran between two rows of human bodies. Side by side, and close together, with faces uncovered, lay men and women, sailors, officers, richly dressed ladies, aristocratic looking men, masters, servants and guests.

But even in the dim light of the saloon, the faces of the prostrate forms did not seem to be those of dead people. A slightly flickering haze appeared to rest on or just above them, casting a pallid light upon those ghastly countenances.

Dr. Willow was the first to move, and strode between the bodies to the form of a beautiful young woman, who had the raven hair and proudly curling lips of a Portuguese belle. It was the commander's beloved.

The surgeon laid one hand upon her cheek, and one upon the forehead of her father, who lay next to her, and then recoiled as though shot.

"There is life in these bodies," he shouted. "Some powerful spell or sleep has been cast upon them."

"Then you can revive them?" asked the lieutenant in a hopeful voice.

"Not until I know the cause," Dr. Willow responded quickly. "We must search the ship."

In the engine-room was found the engineer, carefully oiling and examining the machinery, seeming to wonder why it did not go. He gave no heed, as though unaware of the visitors' presence. In the boiler-room the firemen searched the empty bunkers anxiously for coal. They neither saw nor heard. In the galley was found the ship's cook, almost hidden behind

towering piles of cakes, pastries and loaves of bread. He was vigorously kneading dough and paid no attention.

The lieutenant and surgeon were leaving the galley when a seaman rushed up with the news that there was an odd-looking man in the wheel-house. The sailor's voice shook with such evident fear that the others were infected. They stepped aside and allowed the Doctor the privilege of leading the way to the pilot-house.

He entered, and gasped in astonishment at what he saw. There, seated upon a high stool, with both hands clasped tightly to spokes of the wheel, was Shirzahmeda.

He did not sit upright on the stool, but leaned far over to the right. In falling into this uncomfortable posture he had pulled the steering wheel over. He must have sat thus a day and a night, during which time the yacht pursued its circular course until the engines stopped.

"This man is Shirzahmeda," Dr. Willow whispered to the seamen. "He is a marvelous hypnotist. He has placed every one of the yacht's company under his influence. We must blindfold him first of all, for, with one glance of his eyes, he would hypnotize us all!"

The surgeon arranged a pea-jacket in the form of a bag and on the instant that he slipped it over the man's head four stout seamen seized his arms and legs. He struggled like a madman until they got him out of the wheel-house and pinned his squirming form face downward on the deck.

There, in a twinkling, he was securely trussed. Bound hands and feet, arms and legs, and with the pea-jacket hood strapped tightly over his eyes, he was lowered into the long-boat.

Attention was then turned to the people of the yacht, the Doctor's own efforts being devoted to reviving Dom Luis and his daughter. A small army of the cruiser's men, acting under his direction, worked over the captain, officers, sailors and guests. At the end of three hours every one had been restored to consciousness and had taken a little nourishment. All were greatly weakened by their long sleep, but were out of danger.

The yacht's people were then transferred to the cruiser. Darkness had fallen, and both ships lay to for the night. At dawn

a heavy treasure chest was brought from the *Flora da Angra* and the yacht set out under sail, in charge of her own captain, for Buenos Ayres, for coal.

Great was the astonishment of Dom Luis Chagas and his friends when the story of their remarkable voyage and rescue was recounted. The grateful plutocrat, with the politest oaths of aristocratic Portuguese, swore that Capitão Corvo was the most gallant sailor on the sea and must marry his daughter. With this promise of wedding bells soon to ring, and with two such happy lovers on board, every one was in a joyous mood and the voyage almost like a honeymoon.

Much speculation was indulged in concerning the actions and designs of Shirzahmeda. He had seen the treasure chest put on board the yacht in the harbor at Lisbon, it was decided, and had stowed himself away on the vessel, only to appear on deck when well out to sea and hypnotize every one as he met them. He had then attempted to navigate the craft, probably in search of his long-dreamed-of India. What fantasies had surged through that mysterious brain, what visions of empire, power and wealth when he should reach the Orient, may never be known.

At Lisbon Shirzahmeda was imprisoned. Not for long, however. Dr. Willow saw him a month later, standing by the Black Horse statue, as ragged a beggar as any of his fellows. Something had happened in prison — an accident, perhaps — for Shirzahmeda's right eye had been removed. His left optic still flashed in anger and hate, but alone it had no power to frighten or command. He is probably there to this day.

"But why," some one may ask, "why did Shirzahmeda sail the yacht in a circle? Why did he sit there on the stool and allow himself to be taken so easily?"

In glancing about the pilot-house Shirzahmeda caught sight of himself in a mirror. He gazed into his own eyes with a growing fascination. He stared a second too long, however. He had hypnotized himself.



The Vacant Seat.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



It was noted that wherever he sat there always remained a vacant seat beside him on his left. At the play the seat next him on that side was never occupied — at church it was the same. In the cars, when he traveled, or on the water, there always remained that vacant seat on his left.

It would seem that he was accompanied through life by an invisible companion, who remained at his side as faithfully as space itself.

“He is mad !” said many. “He goes nowhere but he purchases an extra seat that he may always have a vacant chair beside him. No sane man would act so.”

“No, he is not mad, but he is a coward !” said others. “He fears that an enemy will some day sit beside him on his left and stab him in the heart !”

“He is neither mad nor a coward,” whispered two or three. “There is no vacant seat beside him — a murdered man’s ghost sits there !”

So men and women reasoned about the riddle, but the man who was haunted by a vacant chair on his left heeded them not.

Sometimes an uninformed stranger, or again a rash acquaintance, would seek to occupy the vacant seat, but the act would be quickly repented. A swift glance and a low-spoken word of caution from the owner of the unoccupied seat had about them a subtle power that stayed the rashest, and the offending party would murmur a hasty apology and withdraw.

Occasionally, but so rarely that those few who had once witnessed the incident were unable to support their statement by a second example, the man would seem to speak softly as to an in-

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visible companion on his left. But he may have been merely musing to himself or have addressed some passing ghost of memory. There was nothing in his manner to show that he thought the vacant seat on his left was ever occupied.

It was at the play that the mystery ended. It was a love-lit, lavender-sweet play of the period of the man's youth. He sat alone in a box on the right, half withdrawn into the shadow of the curtains, while close on his left was the haunting vacant seat.

Suddenly those near him in the orchestra saw him start up with a poignant cry of joy and bend over the empty chair.

"Alice!" he whispered. "I have kept this vacant seat beside me all these long years that it might be ready when you chose to come back to me — *and to-night you have come!*"

His arms closed tenderly around the ghostly vacancy of the empty chair, as a lover's arms about the form of a living woman. A moment he remained thus, then there was a heavy fall, and an usher swiftly drew together the curtains of the box.

The man haunted by a vacant seat was dead!



A Curious Incident.*

BY LESLIE DARE.



HANCE brought together three friends of college days after long years of separation.

The host of the occasion was in his own home, a handsome residence in an Eastern city. During the interval before dinner they sat in comfortable and luxurious intimacy over their cocktails, in an interchange of confidence, incident or experience with the light and genial touch of a conversation occasionally running into spontaneous and witty generalities.

It was Burton who finally held the inquiring attention of the others by a recital that wore the charm of mystery, and by implication, a betrayal of a tendency to mysticism, since he rejected the practical solution suggested by one of his listeners. This brought upon him the veiled but none the less effective ridicule of his friend, and some discussion among all three.

Burton, while listening to the others, idly occupied himself with a portfolio near at hand, and for the moment scanned critically a drawing which arrested his attention. The subject was not unusual, but a nameless subtlety in treatment impressed him as novel and striking in effect — even masterly.

The subject was a young mother with the face of a virgin, and a child which she seemed to be attracting toward her by the partial display of a virginal bosom. How this idea of virginal beauty was conveyed to him he could not define. He was about to remark the incongruity when his host's voice claimed his attention, to the exclusion of the picture, and, closing the portfolio, he confined his attention to the subject still under discussion.

To his surprise, his host, hitherto non-committal, now seemed inclined to support his own position. He was saying, a little nervously:

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“But for a curious incident in my own life, I doubtless, like you, should be wholly skeptical. While not actually offering an explanation, I may yet suggest that certain well attested experiences imply to me at least the existence of laws of mind and spirit not yet understood, but which a fuller development of faculty will grasp and explain upon perfectly natural lines, but which, until understood, will be classed as supernatural or as occult mysteries.

“Some years ago, in my capacity of civil engineer, I was in the far West. By the way, I have a folio of drawings of odd characters and landscape bits which possibly may interest you. Western scenery is wonderfully attractive, and I never wholly abandoned my sketching habit.”

While speaking he had crossed the room and had taken up the folio, from which he abstracted a couple of drawings which he slid into an open drawer, and then, returning, made a general display of its contents. Resuming his seat he continued:

“It was once our good fortune to ‘put up’ for a time at a house that was singularly romantic and picturesque in its situation, environment and isolation. Only the urgency of our need and the fact that it was nightfall procured for us the privilege of temporary accommodations. Though satisfied as to our credentials, our host remained for a time courteously distant, and I regretted the intrusion which circumstances compelled. Nevertheless, it chanced that I and my assistant remained several weeks. Originally Eastern people, they possessed a degree of cultivation and there was a most excellent library in the house.

“It is with their eldest daughter that my story concerns itself particularly. From the moment that her singularly tranquil and candid eyes looked into mine, a most extraordinary life began for me. It is perhaps impossible for me to explain precisely what the effect was. Understand me, however, it was not of love, nor emotion, nor anything that I can name.

“What occurs to defective sight when for the first time suitable glasses are adjusted to the eyes, now occurred to my mental vision. My whole nature, indeed, was suddenly supplemented by a new and tranquil force which seemed to possess me. Whether I turned my thought within myself or without, the effect was the same — an accession of power and insight — but the interior

self, that had scarce ever asserted its existence, now made me aware of a latent power within me hitherto unsuspected. I am convinced that the most of us do not live even half the life with which the Creator has endowed us.

“We did not seek each others’ society. Indeed, we spoke but little; yet I was certain that the interest was mutual. There was very little to base conversation upon — so new an acquaintance did not warrant an interchange of thought — and yet I might have known her forever according to the quality of the thought awakened and directed toward her. As I said before, we conversed but little, yet there seemed within myself, at least, a continual and active conversation going on between herself and me, and upon every conceivable subject attractive to the philosophic mind.

“If you have ever considered it at all, you will realize that mental conversation is vastly different from that spoken. It is not hampered by convention, and embraces with freedom all subjects that may engage the mind. To come in touch with people is something more than a figure of speech. No two human beings can by mere speech hold such communication, because of a lack of frankness for one thing, and because there are not words enough, nor finely enough shaded distinctions, to express the subtleties of thought to the ear. Questions were answered with a clearness and relevancy astounding, and in a few weeks I had gained more insight into the laws of mind and nature than any book could possibly have afforded me — not knowledge to be formulated, but intimations of those deeper processes of thought and life that stir the soul vaguely at times with a sense of mystery. Yet, I repeat, in reality we conversed so little that as time passed on, and when in the nature of things I should have known her better, she seemed even more remote and unapproachable than at first.

“She was, perhaps, twenty-five; blonde, rather full in form, though exquisitely proportioned; and with any complexion or coloring other than that which nature had given her would have seemed voluptuous even in her type of womanhood. But she had skin of singular delicacy and of a blue whiteness which rarely warmed into color. Her eyes were dark, blue, and of a singularly

soft brilliance if her emotions were stirred, but at other times dreamy and like a child's eyes for clearness and candor. Her hands and arms were beautiful, though she seemed unconscious of them or of herself in any way. There was from the first, I noticed, however, a most singular quality of action about her which I could not define to myself, nor explain on any ground, so elusive was the idea, so intangible the action. Virgin though I knew her to be, there was often a look almost maternal on her face, and in the eyes which, in their deep tranquillity yet seemed to regard that which was beyond my vision. Then, too, there was a peculiar motion of the hands, as of leading or caressing, and often with a beautiful illumination of countenance unspeakable.

“‘Has she waking dreams?’ I would ask myself, and I felt baffled and troubled. Strange thoughts came into my mind, and I pondered and longed to understand, until, one evening, as I saw this oft repeated phenomena of her being, I mentally commanded with agitated intensity, ‘Tell me why you act thus! What is it you see and touch?’

“She swiftly turned, walked a few paces and, facing me, looked steadily into my eyes as she held her clasped hands before her appealingly, and said in tense tones: ‘Oh, I cannot tell you!’

“It is impossible to express the effect of this speech upon both of us. I sprang from my chair, while a startled look of excitement, surprise, and self-betrayal leapt into her eyes. A wave of color swept her face, then faded, and her attitude softened into one of mute appeal. She was beautiful at that moment.”

Burton glanced expressively at McAlpin, whose skepticism had veiled itself in a non-committal attitude of attention. Slightly changing his position he apparently toyed with the portfolio; the sketch he sought was no longer there.

The narrator paused an instant only, and then continued in controlled but still, tense tones:

“‘Alice!’ I cried, speaking her name as in my thought. “‘What does this mean? Is it true — have we in reality been conversing in our thoughts for these weeks? Can it be true?’

“‘I — I do not know. I do not understand,’ she faltered. ‘It is very strange. I do not know what made me speak.’

“She hesitated, and though there was no moisture in her eyes

there was all the effect of tears in their soft brilliance. I was at once bewildered and joyful. I struggled between the opposing desires to comfort or to prove her further; then impulsively tried to touch her hands, but with the utmost sweetness and dignity she denied me, and with perfect composure left the room.

“For many days after that I had no opportunity to speak to her alone. She did not seem to avoid me, but still I gained no advantage. The novelty of the circumstance, and my own suddenly awakened tendency to romance, together with the sense of newly discovered power, were too much for me, and wrought upon my mind to a degree almost beyond control. I longed to be in her presence — to study her. I mentally questioned, demanded or entreated, according to my mood, with all the energy of my nature, but quite in vain — there was no response.

“It was the most distracting and curious experience of my life. Alice seemed to grow more and more abstracted from the externalities of life, though her duties were of the most prosaic and practical nature, and while she seemed forgetful of my presence I believed her alive to every movement and thought.”

Here he paused a moment, changing his position, and looked thoughtfully and intently into space. McAlpin observed him closely, noting each change of expression as he continued:

“The more I watched her the stronger grew the jealous instinctive suspicion that she possessed some resource uncomprehended by me, and that I was in a manner shut out. It grew unbearable. In her face there continued the mysterious charm of an impenetrable calm, but it drove me into a state of moody irritation. The time came when we must prepare to move on to another point, and the thought of a change annoyed me. One evening, dissatisfied and restless, I paced up and down the veranda until a late hour. It was in August and a moonless night. I stepped off the porch and on to the grass, presently passing a low French window rather far back toward the end of the house. There was no path there and the window was partly concealed by shrubbery. There was a subdued light and I glanced in.

“Within was Alice, seated in a low easy chair, her face rapt and thoughtful. I deliberately stood and watched her, filled with conflicting and curious emotions. She bent forward, her

expression changing to one of serene joy as she held out her hands in an entreating and caressing way toward a beautiful child of perhaps eighteen months. At first I had not seen it — but now I beheld it distinctly. It seemed to respond, yet hesitate with smiling indecision. Alice, throwing herself on her knees, archly invited the little one to her arms. As it was still reluctant, she partly bared her beautiful bosom, and then, triumphantly and sweetly, clasped the little one to her breast.

“For an instant my brain reeled. Confusion entered my soul, so many were the emotions contending for mastery. My veins swelled and my heart beat madly. I must have moved, and in moving made a noise. Alice glanced upward with a startled face and rose to her feet. *She was alone.* Instinctively she drew her draperies closer about her, moved across the room, and extinguished the light.

“I withdrew under the most intense excitement. All night I tossed and thought, struggling with the strange problem that did not lessen the mystery now that I knew the meaning of that exquisite look that came so often to her face, and the strange caressing motion of those singularly expressive hands. There was no child in the house; I knew that well; and yet —

“Our going could no longer be delayed, but I determined on some pretext to return and to solve this mystery. Very reluctantly I made preparation for departure. I made a sketch of the scene I have described with a purpose in view, should I return according to my intention. Discreet and veiled inquiry elicited but little information, and that little was based upon a rumor only. It was to the effect that the daughter had been married and widowed on the same day through some tragic accident, but how it came about none knew, nor, indeed, if it were true at all, since the story had followed them from some remote place, and she had always borne the family name. Sociability had been discouraged by indifference, and they were considered ‘different’ from others.

“Naturally, I could not press my inquiries, and dimly I connected the circumstances related with a tragedy that had awakened my interest several years before; but the little I gathered was far from satisfactory.

“After I had been gone a short time I found with joy that mental communication seemed to be reestablished even at a distance. I grew tranquil again.

“It was some time before circumstances permitted my return. Alice was not in the house, and upon some pretext I walked about the grounds with the hope of finding her, and a sure instinct led me to her. Without making my presence known I stood for a moment viewing a picture already familiar to my inner vision, oft repeated in the several weeks just passed. At the point where I stood the cliffs commanded a noble and beautiful view of river, valley and hills, and there sat Alice, her face passive and its expression abstracted. Near her was the form of a little, shadowy child, amusing itself, and now and then she absently threw it a flower or paid it some slight attention, but ever with that peculiar air of abstraction implying deep reverie.

“I said within myself — ‘the child is not claiming her whole mind, she is thinking of something — may be of some one else.’

“Compelled to meet her formally, I spoke her name as I advanced. She rose to her feet, blushing a little, but quite composed in manner, and though she professed pleasure at our meeting expressed no surprise. Our conversation was conventional, and presently we turned our steps toward the house. There was now no child to be seen, but the backward glance and a slight motion of the hand told me that to her it was still present.

“Daring all, I asked, ‘Where is the little one?’

“She lifted her eyes to mine, paling visibly.

“‘What do you mean?’ she almost whispered. ‘Oh, I do not understand,’ she cried, pressing her hands to her temples and regarding me with troubled eyes.

“‘Nor do I,’ I returned gently, ‘but do not be troubled. God has certainly given me the right to sympathize with you, through I know not what mysterious law of our being, and involuntarily I have been made aware of much of your inner life. Trust me, and answer a question. Had I a place in your thoughts when I saw you first — a few moments ago?’

“‘Yes, I was wishing you could see —’

“‘Well?’

“‘I cannot go on.’ She paused. Tears fell from her eyes,

and then she began again to speak, though with a downcast gaze.

“ ‘I cannot understand. This experience has been most extraordinary. You have never seemed a stranger and to meet you seemed but the renewal of some past and intimate friendship; and though I could control my outer life, the inner life that I habitually live in thought was strangely intensified after you came to us.’ ”

“ ‘Yes; I think I understand,’ I responded, ‘but will you tell me what it was that you wished me to see, a few moments ago?’ ”

“ ‘I cannot.’ ”

“ ‘Will this help us to a better understanding?’ I asked, taking from my pocket the drawing of which I have spoken and unrolling it before her. She flushed deeply, and then replied with some hesitation as change after change passed over her sensitive face:

“ ‘I see that you do understand, and have seen him. No one else does, or can, though he is always present, and I hear his voice. Sometimes I think others must hear or see him, but I know that they do not. He is mine, and the greatest comfort and pleasure this lonely place can give me. I do not know how he came to be mine. I only know that in my loneliness I longed for him, thought about him, until one day my thought child appeared, very faintly. But gradually it grew stronger and brighter until he became as you now see him.’ ”

“ ‘Is he here — now?’ ”

“ ‘Certainly,’ she said in surprise. ‘Can you not see him?’ ”

“ ‘Not now. Let us try an experiment. Think of him and of me at the same time with the desiring will that I shall see —’ ”

There was a slight commotion in the adjoining room, as of some one entering, and the prattle of a baby’s voice. The portière was swept aside, revealing a woman of singular and delicate loveliness, holding by the hand a little child.

McAlpin’s regret for the interruption was instantly replaced by admiration for womanly beauty,—but Burton drew a quick breath of surprise and instant recognition.

Before him was the living incarnation of the shadowy child of the picture.



The Hall of Dreams.*

BY EDGAR S. NYE.



MOST people stifle their dreams as they stifle their conscience. I don't. I give mine full sway. For to me

Life is but a dream-paved way
O'er which we wander to and fro
From the Present unto Yesterday.

They take me beyond the narrow walls and confines of materialism out into the dim and distant realms of the Unknown. And in these journeys of fancy I come to understand much that is hidden to the average mortal. In this way I came to know of the approaching dissolution of John Winton, though he was three hundred miles away, almost as soon as he himself did.

I was sitting alone in my room, gazing into the open fire, when the message came to me. It was a night to sit and dream. The wind was howling over the housetops and whisking little flurries of sparks and ashes up the chimney, and in the semi-darkness of the room I was reeling off the films of memory and developing them by the aid of the softly glowing embers in the grate.

Suddenly there seemed a hitch somewhere in the mechanism. The pictures refused to come. I sank back further in my chair and closed my eyes, and when I opened them again a few minutes later, his face was looking down at me from the mirror over the mantel, — looking at me with the same expression it had held that day at the water hole near Caloocan, when the Insurrectos' bullets were kicking up the dirt and gravel about us in much the same manner a street-sweeping machine does the dust on Broadway.

We lay there for two hours amid a seething hailstorm of lead

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before our regiment charged and rescued us, and during those two hours we cemented a friendship such as rarely exists on this earth. We had been "bunkies" since we first joined the regiment, but something in the nearness of death that day brought our souls into unison for all time.

I shall never forget his look as he reached his hand across to me while the bullets were humming the thickest, and asked me if I had ever heard Seneca's definition of friendship.

I remember I shook my head, — it did not seem worth while to speak. And he seemed to come to that conclusion himself, for he lay still for several moments before he spoke again. But when he did his voice was as sweet and low and gentle as a woman's, and its calmness quieted the nervous tension that was sending the blotches of red dancing before my eyes.

"'The purpose of friendship is to have one dearer to me than myself, and for the saving of whose life I would gladly lay down my own, taking with me the consciousness that only the wise can be friends; others are mere companions,'" he quoted.

He was still a few moments, then he asked: "Would you do that for me, Jack?"

I looked across into his eyes, and I think it was more what I saw shining there than it was my moral courage that made me answer "Yes." And it was then that we made our pact. Winton wrote it out on the fly-leaf of his diary, using a piece of pampas grass for a pen and blood from the wound in his leg for ink. And we both signed it. The letters shine out before me now as I write. In his round, feminine hand they are appearing across the face of the page in brilliant contrast to the dull black of the ink marks.

Perhaps it would interest you to see them too. If so, here they are:

"I promise to be a friend to you, — the kind of a friend that Seneca describes, — as long as what I now know as life or consciousness shall manifest itself either in this material body or its ethereal counterpart. And I promise that in case I pass through the change first, I will, if it be possible for me to do so, let you know what awaits you in the unknown Beyond."

I read it through when he had finished, and reached over and signed it. The movement brought my head above the hole I

had scraped out for my body, and a fusillade of bullets from the enemy shrieked over and about us. I must have ducked rather suddenly, for I saw the faint semblance of a smile on his lips when I next looked over at him.

"We won't get it here, either of us," he said. "We will go on for several years yet. I shall go first. But I will let you know. And I want you to come and be with me when I go. Not that I am afraid to pass out, but because I don't want to lose you. I want to take your soul on part of the journey with me; then it can come back to your body and you will know, when you pass on, how and where to find me, or I to find you."

As the echo of his words died in the corridors of my memory, the reflection in the mirror began to fade, as though moving swiftly away at the back of it, and as it dwindled into nothingness a bare forearm appeared in place of it. The forefinger was missing in the second joint as was Winton's. It beckoned to me for several seconds, and then it too faded away; and I sat upright in my chair, knowing as well as I did a few minutes later, when his telegram came, that he was about to pass on to the next plane of his evolution.

The telegram contained but two words, — "The Change" — but to me they meant volumes; and six hours later I was at his side.

I had never met any of the members of his family, — somehow he had always led me to believe he had no near relatives — but I knew the moment my eyes rested upon the girl who admitted me at the door that she was his sister. There was the same expression about her eyes and mouth that had always charmed me in him. She put out her hand and took mine with a masculine straightforwardness that immediately captivated me, and with a simple word of greeting led the way to his room.

On the way over on the train I had conjured up visions of the condition in which I would probably find him; but none of them were correct. I had never seen him look stronger or healthier in the seven years I had known him, and so I told him as I took his hand.

He smiled — the same smile I had learned to love and look for in the old days — and shook his head.

"It's the heart, Jack," he answered. "I've never fully recovered from that severe attack of rheumatism I had in the islands."

Then he glanced at his sister, and I saw her eyes turn to me with a mute appeal in their depths. He smiled faintly and beckoned her to come over beside him.

"Sit down here, dear," he murmured, softly. "I want to talk to Jack about you."

She came over and sat on the edge of the bed facing me, taking his hand in both of hers.

"Brother dear is very foolishly worrying about me and my future," she said with an attempt at cheerfulness; but I saw the tears welling up in her eyes even as she spoke. "He doesn't seem to realize that I am a grown woman and fully able to care and provide for myself. I hope, Mr. Weston, that you won't take anything that he says seriously. I—I can earn—"

Winton reached over and drew her down to him, and for several minutes he whispered in her ear. When she lifted her face it was scarlet, and she kept her eyes on the coverlet beside her.

"Jack," he said, turning to me: "I am going to will this little girl to you. She will be left entirely unprotected when I'm gone, and I want her to be able to find me when she comes to the other side. You are the only one that can guide her. Can I trust her to you?"

I felt my vocal cords congesting in my throat and rose to my feet and turned aside until I could control my emotions. There was something so intensely tragic in his voice that the tears came to my eyes in spite of my efforts to prevent them.

"By our friendship," I answered, huskily. "And the same friendship is hers, for all time."

He reached over to join our hands together, and I saw a spasm of agony cross his features.

She turned and caught him in her arms and laid him on the pillow.

"Quick!" she cried. "The little crystals in the box on the dresser! Break one in a towel and hold it to his nose."

I jumped to obey her bidding and held the amyl nitrite to his

nostrils; but he motioned me away and raised himself further up on his pillow.

“Don’t!” he pleaded. “Don’t give me any more of that stuff. It will only keep this pain-racked heart of mine going a little while longer, — and it’s tired — awful tired.”

He reached up and laid his hand caressingly on his sister’s head.

“Dear little Rose,” he murmured, softly, “move a little further up so that Jack can take my hand. That’s it. I want him to hold me while I go. Jack, I want you to hold fast and go with me until I let you go. I won’t take you too far, for you must come back and look out for Rose. And I shall be very happy, Jack, if you marry her. You need each other. I have saved her all these years for you, my friend. Even Seneca couldn’t ask more of a friend, could he?”

He paused. His lips quivered and his eyes grew hazy. For several seconds he was silent, and his eyes sought first the face of his sister and then myself. Then they became fixed in a far away look, and he went on, his voice barely audible:

“The purpose of friendship is to have one dearer to me than myself, and for the saving of whose life I would gladly lay down my own — that only the wise can be friends — taking with me — with —. The bullets can’t hit us, boy. Just lie low and let them shoot their heads off. The price of lead will be higher in Manila in the morning . . . Jack, — closer. Hug the ground tight. Hold me — hold me, — hold —”

His lips moved swiftly but no sound came forth. His lower jaw relaxed and sank down upon his neck. The girl beside him gave a little gasping sigh and slid down upon the bed with her head resting against his shoulder. The movement of his chest ceased and his eyes slowly closed. I reached over and pressed the lids down upon the eyeballs, but as soon as I released them they flew open again, and an expression that I knew must be a manifestation of consciousness came to them. I felt his pulse. It was wholly imperceptible and the reflex action was entirely gone. Still he looked at me with that steady, searching gaze I had so often seen him assume when he was in deep thought. Then his eyes closed, and I felt a slight tingling sensation

running up my hand and arm, and the clasp of his hand upon mine tightened. Gradually I felt a great peace and calmness stealing over me; waves of exhilarating vibrations swept over me from head to foot. I opened my eyes and met his. They were wide open again and staring straight past me toward the window. Something had come into the atmosphere of the room that made every fibre of my being tingle with ecstasy. Though I had always been mortally afraid of a dead body, I felt no fear then. I did not even feel the inclination to see if the girl beside me were dead or alive. All was peace and harmony; and over me crept a desire to remain perfectly still and enjoy it. . . .

I looked again, and saw a misty, grayish, fog-like substance oozing out from his left chest, which congealed into a pear-shaped formation about the size of a man's clenched hand. This object arose slowly and floated in a small circle above him. Then it was suddenly still, and a moment later disappeared into nothingness. All sense of material form then left me, and I felt myself in the ethers with a sensation of gradually and almost imperceptibly rising and falling until I became engulfed in complete subconsciousness. I had no sensation, no knowledge of time, place or conditions; still my subconscious mind was fully active and every detail of my past life and of people with whom I had come in contact passed before me as vividly and minutely as when they first found impress upon my memory.

Then the articles of furniture and the walls of the room lost their material formation, and I floated, without semblance of form, through beautiful gardens, where the fragrance of the luxuriant foliage, and the singing of gorgeously plumaged birds, complete in harmony of sound and color, wafted me on through boundless voids wherein there was no conception of time, or of space, or of form, or of color; and all was silence, complete, perfect, harmonious.

Gradually there came a consciousness that the ethers were again expressing light and color, and I saw about me numerous vapory somethings, the shape of the human body, but which could be seen through, and which could move through solid substances at will. As I gazed at them, my consciousness and vision became still more acute. I seemed to be hovering near the ceil-

ing of the room. Below me on the bed lay the inanimate forms of my friend and his sister, — and beside them, with my hand still clasped firmly in Winton's, was my own physical body, which was connected with me, seemingly, by a bright, silvery, web-like thread. Winton's wide-open, glassy eyes were staring straight up at the ceiling, and, following the direction of his gaze, I saw another vapory form floating beside me, which was likewise connected to his physical body by a similar cord.

Then I heard a voice, — it was his voice, I knew, though the tones were vibrant with a sweetness I had never before heard, — which said "Come." In an instant we were out of the room and floating along over the city as on a scud-cloud. I began to fear that I would fall, and soon the thought entered my mentality that I was sinking; but even as it did so, Winton placed one of his hands under my arm and said, "You will not fall unless you fear, — hold the thought that you are buoyant, and you will be so."

I did so, and found that I could rise or sink at will. After that we floated off through boundless voids wherein our forms assumed all the tints and colors of an electric fountain. After an indefinite period, — for I had no conception of time or space, — a change came over everything. We seemed to be in a new world, — a land of queer shapes. The vapory, human-like forms that we had previously encountered floated about us on all sides, but they no longer moved intelligently, and, looking closer, I saw that they had been discarded, or shed, by the spirit that had occupied them. And then, to my surprise, I found my own form leaving me, and we passed on, leaving it in the world of shells, but still connected with me by a silk-like cord, just as it, in turn, had been connected with my physical body.

We next entered a great room of sleeping forms lying at rest and peace. Occasionally one of the sleepers would slowly awaken, and his form or sheath would pass out of the room to the place of shells, while he would take on another and still more etherealized one. On such occasions numerous other forms, more ethereal than the sleepers, would hover about him, soothing and comforting him, and then melt away to some other plane, taking him with them.

Again the scene changed, and we found ourselves in a beautiful park. Here, evidently, were the awakened souls we had seen leave the large room, for they were all wandering aimlessly backward and forward, as though searching for their own particular place of habitation. Suddenly a form confronted us that was totally unlike any of those about us, and more beautiful than any I had yet seen.

"You have gone as far as you can go," it said, addressing Winton. "No Soul may travel beyond its spiritual boundaries."

"And I, too?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied. "You have reached that part of the 'other life' which will be yours when you part with your body, unless you develop still more, and thus pass into a higher grade."

"So there are higher planes yet?" I queried.

"Yes; plane after plane — the splendor of which even I cannot conceive. An infinity of infinities of planes are before us, and then '*The Absolute*.'"

"And what are we — what am I — among all this inconceivable greatness?" cried Winton.

"You are the most precious thing in the universe — a living Soul," replied our informant. "You are a part of it all, and are eternal. Without you nothing could stand, for you are of *The Absolute*."

He stopped for an instant in a listening attitude.

"Some one you have left and love is calling you," he said, turning to Winton. And then, I too, heard, as a dim echo, the low, vibrant tones of a familiar voice.

Winton's features lost their expression of calmness and repose, and he turned to me with a gesture of his old impetuosity.

"Rose needs you," he cried. "Go back to her and comfort her. Tell her how infinitely beautiful and harmonious it is here, — that I am happy, and that I shall wait here until she and you come. She is calling again. Go back to her, and don't forget our friendship."

As he ceased speaking he floated out and away from me, down one of the numerous winding paths of the garden. I tried to follow him, but I seemed to have lost all power of locomotion. A great dread of returning to my former state came to me, and

I turned to the beautiful form that still retained its place beside me.

“Must I go?” I asked.

“Yes,” he answered, “certainly! No Soul can pass on until it has passed through every stage of its evolution, and fulfilled its duties to its fellow beings. Would you leave that poor, tortured soul to cry out her grief alone, when you can comfort and sustain her?”

And then I heard acutely a low wail that seemed to come from some one at my side; instantly everything became utter darkness. There was a whizzing, whirling noise, like the passing of a rapidly moving body through the air, and I opened my eyes on the grief-stricken, tear-stained face of Winton’s sister.

I gently withdrew my hand from his lifeless grasp. “Come, — I will give you his message,” I said, leading her gently from the room. And . . .

“Leave the rest to their imagination,” she has just whispered over my shoulder. And as this is really her story, — I will.



The Espy Curse.*

BY EDWIN CARLILE LITSEY.



HERE was a curse on the house of Espy. A strange and awful fatality had pursued the name for two hundred and fifty years; a fatality as certain as birth and death, as unswerving as the sun in its course. No male Espy ever lived to the age of forty-one. Near the close of their fortieth year (and few died in childhood, for they were a sturdy stock) their doom overtook them. The end of a male Espy was never from disease, and was never peaceful. They died by violence, one way or another. And they died suddenly. The women Espys lived and died as other people, though constantly saddened and perplexed by the presence of a scourge which could not be overcome.

The origin of the fearful legacy which had descended to them from a most remote sire was guarded as carefully by the luckless folk as was the honor of their house. No one not of the name ever knew *why* the fortieth year was the last to all men of the blood. It was an oath-guarded secret, to betray which was worse than death. But this is how the strain of doom began.

Away back in the days when Roundhead and Cavalier made of all England a battlefield, there lived in a low country shire a nobleman by the name of Sir Marmaduke Espy. His castle was old and strong, his rent roll was long and was kept clean, and his wealth was great. He followed valiantly in Cromwell's wake until peace was on the land again, then hied him back to his castle and cast about him for a wife. He was a stern and cruel man, albeit he had a trick with his gray eyes which betokened gentleness and humor. It was this trick which won for him the Lady Godiva, a slender, golden-haired girl, daughter to old Sir Gaspar Noel, whose lands touched Sir Marmaduke's to the south.

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It was told about the country that Lady Godiva was gifted with second sight, and could commune with spirits. Sir Marmaduke had heard the tale, but little did it bother him. They were wed with much pomp and ceremony, a feast was spread to which every retainer of the two houses was invited, and life for the married pair started most auspiciously.

After a few years it chanced that a cousin of the new wife came a-visiting from the court of France. He was a much dressed youth, who played the lute and sang *chansons*. His fingers were white and slender, his nails were pink and polished, and he wore fine lace at his wrists and throat. Sir Marmaduke despised him from the first, and it suited him poorly that the cousin and Lady Espy should be so much together. Day after day they strolled through the gardens of the castle, but more often Lady Espy's young son was with her, which lent an air of propriety to their companionship.

Then there came a day when a long-tongued serving wench sought Sir Marmaduke with a tale of broken faith. He did not know that she was one whom his wife had sent to the scullery from position as chamber attendant, because of misconduct, but his ignorance of this could in no way excuse his actions. It so happened a feast was to be held in the hall of the castle that very evening, and, exercising a rare cruelty, the nobleman waited until the guests were seated and his wife was by his side. Then suddenly, without warning, and without previous word to her, he rose up and denounced her as faithless before all who sat there, speaking very hard and bitter accusations. Then he ordered her from his roof, robed as she was in her festal garments. Bade her begone straightway, even as he stood. The cousin who had caused all the trouble arose from his seat to say somewhat in her behalf, whereat Sir Marmaduke drew bow and sent a shaft through his heart, so that he fell dead across the board and his blood flowed among the viands of the feast.

At first the Lady Godiva turned very white, and grasping the arms of her chair, stared up at her accuser with a stone-blank face. Then when the insult began to burn in her bosom, which had never cherished a disloyal thought, she got on her feet, and, stately and proud, walked the length of the hall. At the open

door she paused and turned, and while all the assembled people looked at her, and while her husband who had put her away looked at her, she looked at him, and spoke. At first it was a simple denial of the charge, in clear, cold words. Then her features and manner changed. Her eyes widened, and her form seemed wrenched by a sudden shock. Stretching out her arm, she pronounced a curse upon Sir Marmaduke, and upon his name forever. She foretold that he would die by violence before the dawn of his next birthday, and that the same fate should rest upon his sons after him forever. They might enjoy life until they reached his present age, but beyond that they should never go. Then she left the hall, found a horse, and rode alone to her father's roof.

Such was the origin of the curse, and for two hundred and fifty years it had not failed. Sir Marmaduke was past forty when he committed his awful sin. A few months later, while enjoying a hunt, he was thrown from his horse and was torn to pieces by a wild boar. And so it had gone on down the line. Espys were born, male and female, and Espys were wed, but no man had ever lived till he was forty-one. In divers and sundry ways their fate found them; some in battle, some at the hunt, some at merry-makings, some by assassins' hands, and a few by their own, when the grewsome knowledge became too heavy to endure. And this was the rule of the house. When a boy had grown to manhood and had passed on to his twenty-fifth year, his nearest relative acquainted him with the story here set down, and pointed him to his long line of ancestors to support the tale. Few there had been who had blanched at the fearsome news. In the main they were a devil-may-care, happy-go-lucky set, the Espy men, and many of them, when their day of doom was declared, plunged headlong into life, determined to wrest from the fifteen years left the fullest possible measure of happiness. There had been a few serious minded scions now and then who had thought an exemplary life might lift the ban. One had even studied for the ministry, and received orders; had preached for ten years, and was killed while passing a building under construction, by a dislodged piece of stone coping. They could not escape. The fatality which was a part of them came with the

ship which bore them to America. It followed them through the years, generation after generation, and in 1908 we find the Espy home nestled in the blue grass meadows and green hills of Kentucky.

The great white structure with its columned porticos breathed an air of repose and refinement. Horses and cattle and sheep browsed in the outlying pastures. Fields of grain and rich orchards bespoke a yearly bounty; a glorious independence of the city marts. Through the centre of the estate ran a clear, smooth stream, giving life alike to the fields and the beasts of the fields. Besides the servants, the Espy home consisted of three people. The mother — for there was no father now — sixty-five and gray; the daughter, Esther, a cultured, sweet-faced woman of thirty, and Marmaduke, the only son, aged forty. Not since the evil progenitor who had brought the curse upon them had a son of the house borne that name before. But the boy's father had insisted upon it, advancing no argument except that he liked the name, and besides, there was no escape. So our story properly begins with Mr. Marmaduke Espy, of Espy Hall, riding up to the door of his home with a letter which he had taken from the mail-box by the side of the road. He was a large man, a family characteristic, but not unshapely. He sat his horse squarely, his broad shoulders back, and his clean shaven face was very handsome, with a touch of sternness and a decided trace of melancholy. His eyes were gray and frank, with a beam of humor. Back of that was a faint shadow of unrest, but not of fear. He knew that his health was superb; that he was as fine a specimen of physical manhood as could be found within the borders of his state, but he could not forget that he was past forty; that he had, in fact, entered upon the last month of his fortieth year.

As he dismounted and hitched his horse before going in, he stopped for a moment and gazed about him. The June day was a miracle. A few fleecy clouds lay against the bright blue overhead; the grass, and the trees and the flowers all around him were bursting with life, and as he expanded his fine chest to take in the sweet air he knew that he was as full of vigorous and clean life as anything in all creation. Then, an ever-pres-

ent needle point of pain pricking his consciousness, came the thought that his days now were few. Then he entered the house.

There was nothing about it or its occupants to indicate the year of doom had come. The rooms were large, sweet and cheery. Various kinds of flowers in vases lent their fragrance, and as the master of the house appeared in the doorway of the sitting-room his mother came to meet him with a smile and a kiss. He handed the letter he had brought to his sister — it was for her — and laid aside his hat and gloves.

“Oh, Mother, she’s coming!” suddenly exclaimed Esther. “Duke, she’s the dearest girl in the world!”

“Except one,” replied Espy, gravely, coming to her and placing his hand gently on her head. “When does she arrive, little sister?”

“Let’s see. ‘I will start to-morrow.’ — Then she will get here to-morrow! Isn’t that fine?”

“Rather. And does your old brother have to play the beau?”

“Meet her at the station and bring her home. That’s all I ask. She’ll do the rest.”

This with a decided nod of the head which indicated the speaker had no doubt whatever of the ability of the visitor to captivate.

When the blasting story was told him which all his male forebears had heard in turn at the age of twenty-five, Marmaduke Espy became a changed man. Inheriting a rollicking nature, he had lived a free and joyous life in his youth, but when his eyes were opened he grew thoughtful and reserved in demeanor. Very gradually the idea had come to him that he should not marry. He could not understand why the line should have been perpetuated all these years, when this horrible legacy must be handed down to each succeeding offspring. Not content with hearsay merely, he had investigated for himself, and had found the chain of disaster unbroken. Accurate records had been kept in the family archives, and the evidence was indisputable. He, like all the others, must go when the fateful year was reached. For a time the temptation to lead a dissolute and careless life entered in, but he quickly put this aside. He had his mother

to think of, and his young sister. His duty was to make them as comfortable as he could against the coming of that relentless day. So he had outlined a policy of living consistent with the blood of a gentleman, and had held to it unswervingly. And he firmly resolved that the name should pass with him. He could not understand why those who had gone before could have been so selfish. He had no right to existence; scores of others before him had been better off unborn. When this question had been firmly settled to his satisfaction, his fate troubled him but little. He lived with a keen sense of right and justice always before him, and endeavored to make the way easy and bright for those dependent upon him.

His sister's friend did not work immediate havoc with his affections, as Esther had anticipated, and hoped. But she was an unusual girl, or woman, for there was that in her blue eyes which showed that she had seen and known things. Her hair was yellow as ripened wheat, her nose was straight and her lips not too full, but it was her eyes which brought the eyes of Marmaduke back again and again. He could no more understand or solve them than he could tell why violets were blue, but there was some subtle, elusive, insistent call in them. It seemed her soul spoke through them to his soul. As the days passed, and he came to be with her more and more, vague and unaccustomed dreamings began to disturb him. At night when he slept semi-barbaric panoramas would flit before his vision, and frequently bloodshed and death would conclude the blurred pageant. Figures moved before him across a background entirely unfamiliar; he passed under turreted walls and through vast corridors, and once he was in a huge banquet hall of some medieval castle, and saw a stern-faced man drive a golden-haired woman forth with biting words of scorn. And the man was in some way like himself, and the woman was like the guest beneath his roof. When he was awake, he attributed all this to the approach of his doomday. It was a premonition; a warning to him to prepare himself.

The last week in June came, and the wheat harvest was garnered. The farm was in perfect condition, and everything was in order. Marmaduke had been with his attorney two whole days, getting his affairs in shape to leave them. For his forty-

first birthday came on the first day of July, at ten o'clock at night. Any second now the stroke might fall. Seldom indeed had an Espy lived the full time allotted by the curse. Marmaduke could not understand why he had been spared so long, but he was grateful for life, because it meant so much to him. Another week would see the end, and he began to wonder in what shape it would come. He tried to picture the time and manner of his death, and he prayed he might be alone when the stroke fell. When he was in the house his mother and sister watched him with hungry, wistful eyes, and touched him with their hands under the slightest provocation. He bore the ordeal of waiting bravely and patiently, and was merry with his loved ones.

It was during this last week his feelings underwent a swift and radical change towards Edith Knoll. Love awoke like a flash of light in the still places of his soul, and the slender, yellow-haired girl became the embodiment of all perfections. Then he rebelled at his fate. Resentment found place with love in his heart, when he thought how his Nemesis had allowed him to live until this moment, had brought, as it were, the cup of all earthly happiness within an inch of his lips, only to dash it to the ground when he bent his head to drink. Now he wanted to live, whereas before he had schooled himself to meet the inevitable. And still the sword remained poised, while the days passed.

The last one came. The first of July dawned beautifully bright, and seemed anything but a day of sacrifice. Marmaduke arose at his accustomed hour, bathed, and dressed himself with care, as a condemned criminal might awaking to his last morning. Never had he seemed so full of life, so perfectly well. He slipped slightly on the stair as he started down to breakfast, and smiled grimly as he righted himself and descended with his hand on the rail. A fall might easily have proven fatal to a man of his build. An unnatural silence was upon the house and its inmates as the day wore on. The mother hovered about her son with white face and trembling hands, while Esther walked nervously from room to room. Marmaduke was calm. He did not leave the house, and was at his desk most of the morning. Early in the afternoon he started to ride out, but Mrs. Espy clung to him, and begged him to stay with her. He consented.

The long summer day merged at length into twilight, and the tense nerves of the watching women almost reached the breaking point. Edith came down to the evening meal arrayed in the most peculiar gown. It was very ornate, and suggested a past age. The meal was a silent one, and was partaken of sparingly, and with great effort. It was eight o'clock when they arose from the table. There were two hours left. Marmaduke approached Mrs. Espy, and took both her hands.

"Mother, I have something to say to Miss Knoll in private. With her consent she and I will go to the front porch for a short time. I will be with you again soon."

He turned towards Edith as he spoke, and she bowed her head. Kissing his mother on the forehead, Marmaduke went to Miss Knoll's side, and together they passed out to the spot he had named, and sat down. The night was very still, and the sky was thick with stars. He began speaking at once, declaring his love in a plain, straightforward manner.

"You will be doubly surprised at this," he concluded, "when you hear that which is to follow. According to a precedent which has not failed for two and a half centuries, I have less than two hours to live. But if I can know in my last hour that you love me, death will not be so hard."

He could not see that her face was strained, and that one hand clutched her heart, because they sat in the dark. But her voice had a catch in it as she replied.

"What is it? Tell me what it is that makes you say you have less than two hours to live?"

"It has never been told before until the marriage vows were spoken," he answered.

"But that cannot be with us. The time is too short. But when I say that I love you, will not that answer?"

He felt for her face with both his hands, put it between them, and drawing her forward, kissed her lips.

"Let this be our betrothal, then. Now you shall hear."

And straightway he told the tale which had never been spoken before until the marriage vows were said at the altar. She heard him through silently, though now and then an unseen shiver would pass over her. As his voice ceased nine o'clock sounded.

"God of mercy!" she breathed, in a loud, terror-laden whisper, and the second time, barely audibly — "God of mercy!"

With a sudden, quick movement she took his hand in hers, and he was conscious that her flesh burned like fire.

"Oh, listen! listen!" she began, in hurried tones, "for the time is short! I have a story to tell. A story for the testing of your love. I'll make it brief. I'm not the sweet, innocent girl I was when your sister knew me at school. I married secretly — a good, great-hearted man. We were desperately poor, and I thought he tired of me. Then in a moment of grief and folly such as might come to the best of us, I left him and fled with a handsome, dashing youth of the world. The reaction came quickly, and when I realized what I had done I went back to find my husband, but he had killed himself. Then my father took me in. Oh, it's a horrible story! It was all hushed up, and few knew of it. But I am an impostor here, and this confession is due to you, first of all. But that is not all — oh, can't you see that is not all?"

The fingers of her hands were writhing like tongues of flame over his hands.

"Is not that enough?" he asked, in dead tones.

"But the story you told me! The story of the first Marmaduke!"

"Yes," he answered, his head sunk forward.

"My name!" she rambled on, in a semi-hysterical voice. "Do you not know my name?"

"Edith Knoll," he replied, dully.

"Knoll — Noel — yes! But my middle name is Godiva!"

Marmaduke raised his head, and his big body trembled so that the bench upon which they sat creaked on the floor.

"*Godiva! Godiva!*"

"Yes! — Oh, can't you see? I came from the other line! The Noels have come to be Knolls in this country, and in my house the tale of wrong has been preserved all these years! And so at last Marmaduke Espy and Godiva Noel face each other again. This time her sin is real; then it was not. You have been spared to the last hour! Oh, can't you see?"

"That I can right the wrong of my progenitor, and lift the curse? God, it is true! Come, you shall be my wife!"

She arose with him, and he gathered her close to him. In the silence which followed, the sound of sobbing was heard within.

"My mother weeps for her son," said Marmaduke. "She does not know that sorrow has turned to laughter. Let us go to her."

Side by side, their arms around each other, they stood before the mother and sister, while Marmaduke told all the story. Godiva's head was bowed upon his shoulder in shame.

"Sir Marmaduke sent her away without cause," the man's voice concluded, "and I take her back, and pardon her. Mother, sister, your son and brother is saved to you."

As he ceased speaking the hall clock chimed ten. While the strokes were sounding a chilly breath blew upon all within the room, and the air was winnowed as by the passage of wings. But when it was gone Marmaduke and Godiva stood breast to breast, and his forty-first year had come.



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Primal Forces.*

BY MORISON GRAY.



NO one had noticed when the fellow came in. The swing doors made no noise ; and the chorus from the round table would have drowned it anyway. Bowman and I, sitting near the window, chanced to see him first, as we faced the fireplace where he stood with his back to the blaze. We both found ourselves looking at him with something more than mere interest or surprise.

It was unusual for any one not a student or a " grad " to venture into Larry's when the big loving-cup was to the fore, as it always was on Wednesday night ; still, that fact alone would not have aroused extraordinary attention. But there was something about the man which puzzled us. He had the general appearance of a wayfarer or a tramp. His clothes were poor, the collar of his old coat turned up about his throat ; his shoes were broken ; and yet there was an elusive quality in his makeup that somehow bespoke superiority to these conditions, if not indifference to them. It might have been the carriage of his shoulders, which had nothing of the slouch of the professional " beat " ; it might have been the fact of his being clean shaven, though neither of these things by itself was enough to account for the impression his appearance

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created of something beyond the mere out-of-a-job or hard luck case. I think it must have been the manner in which he looked about the room that fixed my attention first.

Larry's was unique. It was not the ordinary café, with sporting prints about the walls, and rows of steins hanging conventionally from the shelves. The pictures were all of 'varsity teams and captains ; a trophy of boating flags hung above the mantel ; and fixed against the wall high up on the long side of the room, was a section of a racing barge belonging to a period of college aquatics before the day of shells.

The stranger standing at the fireplace was looking about him, not with the curiosity of one who views things for the first time, but as a man does when he renews old memories of familiar objects. His gaze went from point to point among the trophies and photographs with the assurance of one who *knows* ; and when he wheeled about and looked behind him at the flags over the mantel, it was but a single glance, as when one wishes to assure himself that a thing is where it used to be.

Bowman kicked me gently under the table. "College man," he muttered ; "get him over here and find out who he is."

Catching the other's eye, he motioned to a chair at our table ; and with a nod the stranger came and took it. "Have something ?" Bowman asked. The reply startled us both. "One of those golden bucks, and a toby." Golden bucks were Larry's specialty ; and no one would have ordered in that confident tone unless he had known it.

While we waited, the new-comer accepted an Egyptian Beauty, and became lost in a reverie from which neither of us ventured to rouse him. Under cover of the smoke, however, I was watching him, as he sat with his eyes fixed upon the brown table. It gave me a creepy feeling. Somewhere in Heine there is a passage where he likens a woman's face to a palimpsest, — you know, — an old parchment used twice, — on which there is a quotation from some religious author, while underneath you can still faintly trace the words of a heathen love-song which the monkish copyist has vainly tried to erase. This fellow's face was a palimpsest. There were different things written on it. They were so mingled that it puzzled you to guess which had been written first, the good or the

evil. Both were there now, anyway ; and as the stranger suddenly raised his eyes, the effect was intensified. It was one of Poe's characters come to life, and sitting there in Larry's cheerful room, — a note of tragedy amid all that youth and exuberance, — with the college trophies and the college songs, so out of keeping with what his somber personality suggested. Unaccountably it irritated me ; and Bowman must have had the same feeling, for all of a sudden he spoke up, and said, " For Heaven's sake, man, have you lost your tongue ? "

It wasn't a polite thing ; but the other didn't appear to mind it. He looked past us to where the loving-cup was passing from hand to hand at the round table with all the solemnity which invests the convivial functions of the undergraduate. His gaze followed it as it went the rounds. What was in that look of his ? Was it curiosity ? Was it regret ? No one could have guessed. His eyes were absolutely devoid of expression. They were as hard and bright and meaningless as agates.

Finally he pulled himself together and spoke ; and his voice was as expressionless as his eyes ; it was devoid of tone, or timbre, or whatever you call it. It was simply an *utterance*. It was without personality in it, — level and flat and dead as that of an automaton ; and yet it thrilled you, unaccountably, disagreeably. You felt as though the speaker's experiences had taken him beyond the point where anything could ever *move* him again ; he simply *accepted* things : that was all.

" You see what I was once." He opened his shabby coat, — and on a slender chain running across his chest there hung a little gold cross. " Fifteen years ago, I was in orders, in a country parish. There was little to do outside the routine of services and what few calls I chose to make upon my scattered parishioners. I lived alone, and put in most of my time reading for a Ph. D. in mental and moral science. Naturally of a morbid temperament, my psychological reading made me more so. Evening after evening I would sit before my fire and let my mind simply drift and wander among the unlimited possibilities of the unknown. I devoured all the strange romances of Dumas and Poe and Bulwer-Lytton which deal with the occult. This was my specialty, my hobby ; it became at last my world. I began to think of myself

no longer as a man with work to do, but as a problem for investigation, a subject for experiment, a field for the operation of invisible forces. That accepted fact of personality with which all human knowledge begins : how account for it ? How explain it ? Of what is it the result ? What holds it in its groove ? How much would it take to uproot and overturn a character rooted in sound moral traditions and buttressed by sound moral habits ? I wondered how it might be in my case. I used in my solitary walks to pass an old house which had stood vacant for years on account of a tragedy which had occurred there. No one would live in it ; and yet, you never would have guessed from its appearance that it had a bad name. By rights, it should have borne a tragic *look*, — mouldering, neglected, with weeds growing high in the dooryard, and windows hastily boarded up. Instead, it was as trim and respectable a little place as you could imagine ; — clean white paint and green blinds, nice little close-cut lawn, with a gravel drive bordered with whitewashed stones. It always gave me this thought ; it had only taken a moment to set the curse upon that house, — the angry word answered by the angry blow ? How long would it take to set the curse upon a *man*, — myself, for instance, — given the opportunity. Would the beast, the primal instincts, dominate the will, the inherited traditions and habits of self-control under which I had always lived ? I recalled the famous passage in Plato, where the spectator in Hades asks why some of those who enter there are sinners, while some are righteous ; and the answer is given that it has been simply a question of opportunity. I wondered, as I say, how it would be with *me* ; how great a degree of moral strain could I endure without a catastrophe ; was opportunity all that was lacking to make of me a villain ?

“ You have no idea of how I was possessed by that thought. It was always with me. A touch might upset my moral equilibrium ; the introduction of some element hitherto unknown might precipitate a catastrophe ; and whereas I looked at this first as a possibility only, I began now to regard it as a certainty ; and found myself awaiting the moment not merely with curiosity, but even with eagerness. Will the chance come today ? Will I to-morrow be like that house on the side road, — smug and trim and

respectable without, but with the stain of a nameless deed within ? I won't dwell on the details ; enough to say that the chance offered ; and that the beast won."

Bowman and I, at our table, had been listening with a strained intentness. It was not until the speaker stopped that we realized how still the room was. The fellows at the round table had ceased passing the loving-cup, and were listening too. Little groups of men from other parts of the room had crept close, and were looking over one another's shoulders with various grotesque expressions of unconscious absorption.

Our man never noticed. After a moment he went on, — always in that passionless voice that made you creep.

"A year later I was in Chicago, living on a little fund I had laid by out of my stipend. That year had been a dream. By some psychological paradox, my personality was divided, not into two, Jekyll and Hyde, — but into three, — the third standing one side, an absolute spectator, and watching the contest, where primal instincts and forces battled against acquired habits and training for the mastery of the soul. It was the strangest thing — and fascinating beyond belief. I *lived* for that problem, — to see whether in the end beast or man would win ; and yet my interest was purely speculative and impersonal. I had no desire for this or that outcome ; I simply watched to see.

"My money was gone after awhile ; and then for the first time I began to realize my true position. I was forced to think of myself not merely as a problem, but as a man who had sinned ; and when I did, life became insupportable. What had become of the girl, I did not know, — I never knew ; but I *did* know that by every consideration of conscience and of reason, as it seemed to me, I ought to put myself out of the way. The test had been made, and the physical had shown itself master. Should I allow myself to continue in life at the risk of repetitions, of even a single repetition, of such a thing as I had done ? Opportunity had revealed me as a villain ; should further opportunity be permitted to emphasize that revelation ? I determined not.

"And now comes the strangest part of the story. My mind was firmly made up to dispose of myself ; but even here the fascination of the old problem re-asserted itself. I would carry

the test between the man and the animal into the very question of suicide ; I would take no deliberate step to kill myself ; but should I be in danger, — as in my precarious mode of life I might be at any time, — I would make no effort to escape. I would be the passive spectator, and let the other two fight it out. I do not think I ever questioned the result. The *will to die* would of course be the stronger. There were absolutely no ties binding me to life. My career was ruined, my character gone, — I had no money, no prospects, no place of repentance ; nothing could undo that into which opportunity had betrayed me. I was confident that when the danger came, I would welcome it with open arms ; and I was eager for the day of my release.

“ You fellows would not credit the shifts to which I was forced in those days for mere existence, — the lowest and most degrading. I was stevedore on the docks, helper in stables, common laborer on the streets. I was exposed to countless risks, — and yet for awhile there was nothing serious enough to meet my need. Exposure and exhaustion, bad food, stimulants, — they ought by rights to have wrecked me : instead they toughened me. I began to regard myself as reserved for the one supreme occasion, the great moment when would come a spectacular test between instinct and conscience ; when *the will to die* would win. The moment came at last ; it was not, however, spectacular ; it was sordid, miserable, hideous. I was working for a contractor who was dredging the harbor. Two shifts were on ; I was one of the night men. Trimming the load on a scow during a pouring rain, my foot slipped, and I went over into the icy water. In a flash the thought came, — ‘ This settles it — the end at last ! ’ But to my horror I found myself struggling desperately, piteously, for life. The primal instinct of self-preservation surged up with a mighty rush and overwhelmed everything else ; I clung in spite of myself to that existence from which I so longed to be free ; and at last, stretched in safety upon the foul mud of the dredger, I wept bitter tears of humiliation and despair.

“ From this time on life became a thing of horror. The forces upon which I had relied had failed me ; that which I had counted out had proved the stronger. The primal instinct, the animal, had ruined life for me ; the same enemy forbade me now to part

with that ruined life. I knew how Dr. Jekyll felt, when, through an unsuspected impurity, the drug which had transformed him into Hyde lost its power to release him.

“And yet there always remained a shred of hope. The next opportunity would do what the first had not. Surely that Pity which broods over the woes of mankind would at length side with that which was best in me, and fight against the beast to his downfall. There *must* be a loosening of that fatal and hideous contradiction by which moral decay, instead of destroying, served to maintain a hated existence. I never once thought of the hereafter; my soul was concentrated upon the one absorbing idea, — to end the present horror.

“And so hope lived ; but hope deceived me continually. Time and again I was in peril ; time and again at the supreme moment came surging up that resistless instinct for self-preservation, snatching me now from in front of a cable-car, now from under a falling wall, — a dozen times from danger of various kinds ; and for what ? Often have I recalled that old-time picture of an angry God, holding sinners over the pit and delaying to plunge them in, that he might enjoy their agony !”

The speaker paused, and his eyes went around the breathless circle.

“I have no business to put such thoughts into the heads of you lads. I don't know why I have told you this. Least of all do I know what has brought me back to this town, and into Larry's. I have given up assigning anything to reason or volition. Primal forces, — uncomprehended, despised, — they are supreme nevertheless. But why should they bring me *here* ? It's the crowning touch of misery, — the last straw. To see you lads, with your clean hearts, and your lives before you, unspoiled —.”

His voice failed him. He suddenly arose, buttoned his old coat about him, and turned to go. The fellows made way for him without a word. The baize doors swung silently to behind him ; and his footsteps died away down the street.

For a long moment nobody stirred. Then someone drew a long breath of relief ; a chair scraped on the floor ; Larry entered briskly with some belated orders ; and the tension gave way. The talk began again ; a cheerful snapping of matches spoke of

pipes relighted ; and the room resumed its customary air.

Bowman and I walked back to our rooms late through the deserted campus. The moon was high, and the air cold and still. The clock on the City Hall tolled out its long deliberate stroke of twelve. The chapel chimes struck in with their cheerful note. Suddenly another bell sounded down town, — the heavy jarring boom of the fire department's signal. In a moment the campus was alive. Windows were thrown open, voices called, feet thundered on the stairways, and the moonlit yard was alive with scampering figures streaming toward the gateways. A reddish glare to the eastward showed the direction of the fire, already apparently under great headway ; and Bowman and I joined in the rush toward the scene.

Fire lines were already established when we arrived, and two engines were hard at work. It was a difficult proposition for the firemen. The blaze had started in the third story of a warehouse, which was sheathed in iron, and fitted at the side and rear windows with iron shutters which defied the axe-men. In front, for some reason, the windows were unprotected ; and here the intense heat had shattered the glass panes, and the smoke was pouring out in clouds, while now and then a long tongue of flame shot curling upward. One of the engines had a stream playing upon the neighboring buildings, and the other was pouring water into the warehouse windows, two helmeted firemen holding the nozzle. Suddenly, on an order through the chief's megaphone, this stream ceased ; a ladder was rushed to the front and reared above the heads of the crowd, falling against the building at a wide angle. Another order, and the two hosemen climbed together like monkeys up the wide rungs, and directed their nozzle toward the window where the glare was brightest. But for some unexplained reason the stream failed to come. The men turned their heads anxiously around, then back again to their hose, and worked furiously at the nozzle ; but something was jambed, and no water followed. Breathlessly the crowd watched them. Somewhere the bark of a dog was audible, muffled, insistent, as though in some distant barn or shed, where he was tied up and excited by the noise. The chief was roaring through his megaphone, the firemen busy in a profane frenzy about their useless hose.

Upstreet we suddenly heard a clang, clang, swelling louder and louder, and amid a warning shout from the crowd a hook and ladder truck, drawn by a pair of powerful grays, swung around the corner, the tillerman working like a fiend at his wheel, and thundered down toward the burning building. The pavement was not of cobbles, as in most factory districts ; but of ancient flag-stones, worn smooth by constant friction of hoofs and wheels. The nigh horse slipped and went on his knees, — heaved himself up by a gigantic effort, — slipped again, and crashed prostrate, dragging his mate with him ; and the great machine, with its half ton of ladders, rolled on and over them, entangling them, thrashing hoofs and jangling harness, in a complete and hopeless wreck.

For once the chief lost his head. He ran distractedly toward the ruin of his apparatus, leaving his engines to look out for themselves. The crew of the ladder truck were straining at the wheels, in a vain effort to drag the machine from the terrified horses ; but the street was steep, and they made no progress. One stream of water still played powerfully, now on the burning warehouse, now on the adjacent roofs ; but the blaze was gaining fast, as the gleam from the windows of the upper floors plainly showed. The fire was working its way through. The barking of the unseen dog became louder, more insistent still ; there was a sudden crash of shivering glass, and the animal appeared at a window of the top story, his paws planted on the sill, a fragment of rope dangling from his collar, and sent out his appeal for help in a note of agony which was almost human. No one heeded. The single ladder already in commission was too short ; the others were in confusion on the helpless truck. The dog disappeared, then came into view again, weaving ceaselessly back and forth within the narrow limits of his window, his throat torn with barking.

Bowman suddenly grasped my arm. “ On the roof ! ” he shouted in my ear. A black figure was visible on the skyline, bending over the projecting cornice, and peering downward. The man wore no helmet, and it was impossible to tell whether he was a fireman. All at once he stood up, pulled off his coat and threw it from him, sat astride of the cornice with one leg hanging over ; then, grasping the coping with both hands, lowered his body to the full

length of his arms, and began to feel with his toes for a foothold. It was a perilous thing to do. Hanging from the wide cornice, he swung out from the façade of the building. Unless he could reach a blind, or a window-cap, on which to rest his weight, he must either draw himself up again by main strength, no ordinary feat for untrained muscles ; or else fall to the street and be dashed to pieces upon the flags. Even should he succeed in finding a temporary foothold, how could that help him ? He dared not for even a second loosen his grip on the cornice. The dog at the window had seen him. He understood that his rescue was being attempted ; and instead of barking, began to whine with a piercing entreaty. The dangling figure was just above him, its feet seeking blindly along the wall.

Casting a look around, I saw on every side of me faces white and strained, their eyes riveted upon the impending tragedy. Behind us a cheer went up. The firemen, hooking both engine teams to the rear of their ladder truck, had at last succeeded in dragging it from the helpless grays. Turning back to the warehouse, I was horrified at what I saw. The man on the top of the building was now hanging by one hand from the cornice, as though exhausted by his efforts ; his body hung limp and apparently nerveless. Shuddering, I closed my eyes ; and when after what seemed an eternity of suspense I opened them once more, I beheld a marvel. The man had let go his hold with one hand that he might reach an inch further with his toes. He was now just able to rest them on the top of the shutters of the window where the whimpering dog was in waiting, the glow of the fire increasingly bright behind him. It was scarcely a foothold that he gained in this way ; but with incredible agility and daring, he let go his hold upon the cornice, at the same moment doubling his body like lightning, and bringing feet and hands together for a single second. It was only for a second ; but as his toes slipped from their precarious resting-place, his hands seized it ; and he hung at full length again over the street, but suspended this time within easy reach of the broad sill.

A roar went up from the crowd. A warning yell followed it, and the firemen dashed through with the life-net, extricated at last from the disabled truck. Ready hands seized it on every side ; and it spread its meshes wide and safe for the man and the dog,

now together at the window, from which the black smoke was pouring in clouds. The man, his hand on the dog's collar, leaned over and seemed to hesitate. A hundred voices shouted encouragement. At last he straightened, steadied himself with one hand against the window-casing, dragged from the room the struggling dog, and heaved him down in safety into the waiting net. A pause ensued, as we waited for the rescuer to follow ; but he waited, looking out over the crowd. Behind him in the interior of the building the fire roared like a furnace ; the engines had long since directed all their efforts to saving the neighboring buildings. The flames from the lower tiers of windows licked hungrily up, and illuminated the black figure standing on the ledge ; and with a thrill Bowman and I recognized our unknown guest at Larry's. The same thought flashed through both our minds, as we glanced into each other's eyes. Why did not the man jump at once into the life-net ? He had no time to spare ; at any moment the building might roar down into flaming ruin. *He was studying his problem.* Even on the brink of that awful death, he was watching, watching, — to see which would prove the stronger, — the *will to die*, — or the primal instinct of self-preservation.

The crowd was breathless, hypnotized ; the firemen shouted advice and warning ; our man seemed not to hear. He looked out over the scene, far away into the distance. All at once the warehouse, riddled through and through by the flames, held together up to now as by a miracle by its outer iron shell, crumpled together inwards like flimsy cardboard ; and sank instantly to a heap of fiery rubbish. The dark form at the upper window, with time for but a single great cry, was swallowed up in the very heart of the glowing mass.

Under the spell of the tragedy we walked back in silence to the campus. At the gate we faced each other with solemn eyes.

"That cry !" said Bowman ; "I shall never forget it — the horror of it !" He shuddered. "It was the supreme utterance of despair !" But I turned away without a word ; for the cry had rung in my ears like a shout of triumph, at the final solution of the problem of an agonized soul.



A Seance and Its Sequel.*

BY ANNA HUSTED SOUTHWORTH.



THE seance took place ten years ago. Its sequel followed almost immediately. Those directly affected have both passed to the spirit world, while we, who remain, never recall the incidents without shuddering acknowledgment of their mystery and truth.

Our friends, Professor and Mrs. Carlisle, were to sail for Europe on March twenty-fifth. I arranged a farewell dinner for the evening of March twenty-fourth, inviting four very intimate friends. A more congenial company never gathered, and there was the merriest, most personal chatting, till some one spoke of wireless telegraphy. At once the talk drifted to kindred mysteries, and some singular experiences were related which seemed quite as incredible as any that had been published by The Society for Psychical Research. While these stories were told, a violent electric storm had come, which might account for unusually excited feminine nerves, but Professor Carlisle and my husband listened with a superior air of polite incredulity, making now and then quietly satirical comments, but the Professor's pretty wife was visibly impressed, and when one lady, a widow, daringly confessed that she had often taken part in seances, and had proved herself to be a "medium," Mrs. Carlisle impulsively exclaimed—

"Oh, how exciting, Bella! Why can't we have a seance now? I should so like to interview my guardian Angel about our coming journey."

Of course the men sneered, but they helped to wheel a heavy round table to the centre of the room. Our "sensitive" friend gave necessary directions, and six of us, with deliciously creepy thrills, stood ready to take our places. The Professor and my

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husband had attempted to join us, but Mrs. Carlisle laughingly protested:

"No, you unbelievers!" she cried. "I have never seen anything like this, and I want the seance to be perfect. We must not have your adverse influence. Go to the den and smoke till we call you!"

"So?" answered the Professor with his favorite German inflection, adding, "Don't allow yourself to be excited Kitty! I shall find, in my smoke-wreaths, phantoms quite as 'spiritual' and fully as prescient, as any that you may evoke. Good luck to you! Come Tom!"

The two sceptics vanished, and we took our seats with extended finger tips just touching. All the lights had been extinguished except a tiny taper in a remote corner which seemed simply to make "darkness visible." We had gravely promised that there should be no trifling, no conscious attempt to push the table, and that we would assume a receptive state of mind, each silently asking for the manifestation of spirit presence, and concentrating our thoughts upon some loved and departed friend.

The dim light, the solemn hush, the waiting in breathless expectation, and strained attention grew oppressive. I felt distinctly every beat of my heart, and as it grew more tumultuous, I absolutely *heard* its throbbing, but I kept my attention fixed on my hands, till a sudden flash from a gem on Mrs. Carlisle's finger caught my eye, and I looked at her. She was ghastly white and trembling violently. As she met my startled gaze, she half whispered—

"I smell violets, but I don't see them. Where are they?" Then, with a frightened cry—

"*Oh! What is it? My hands are growing numb! I can't lift them! See! The table is really moving!*"

We all felt it slipping beneath our fingers. Then, it slowly rocked, stopped, and again back and forth it swayed, making us bend forward to keep our places. A tingling sensation ran up through my arms to my shoulders, and a sudden wave of peculiarly chill air swept through the room, while our priestess uttered a low warning:—

"Hush! Oh, *hush!*" she whispered, and then gravely asked—

"Are there spirits present?"

I was sitting next the lady and I almost bounded from my chair when, directly beneath my hands, three quick, sharp raps were given, meaning "Yes."

Our directress questioned:—

"Have you a message for any one?"

Again the three taps.

"Is it for me?"

One loud rap was the response, meaning "No."

We were told to ask in turn for whom the message was meant. Each one met prompt refusal, until Mrs. Carlisle timidly repeated the formula, when the assenting knocks were heard. Wide-eyed and deathly pale, but resolute, the little lady inquired:—

"Is this the spirit of my Mother?"

"Yes."

"Are you really present?"

"Yes."

"Do you know that we are to sail for Europe to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"How long shall we stay in London?"

Only silence, and our directress murmured:—

"You must put your question so the answer may be either 'Yes' or 'No.'"

Mrs. Carlisle thought an instant, and then asked:—

"Shall we spend the season in London?"

"No."

As if fully assured that she was speaking to an individual, and quite forgetting the rest of us, she exclaimed—

"Oh, Mamma! We have planned to stay there at least till June. Harold knows so many people. His work will keep him. We can't leave before June!"

Dead silence, while breathlessly we all waited.

"Can't we stay till June?"

"No."

"Are we going to Scotland first?"

"No."

"Does danger threaten us?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Carlisle gasped a little, looked round with dilated eyes, and then, bending over the table, she half whispered—

"Is the danger at sea?"

"No."

"In London?"

"Yes."

"From the motor?"

"Yes."

"Can it be avoided?"

"No."

We all recoiled at this reply, so pitilessly brief, when once more that wave of strangely chill air swept over us, while our friend pleaded in vain for more definite information. At length, she sank back exhausted, and our "sensitive" said:—

"I think the spirits have gone. I cannot feel them any longer."

We waited while she made several inquiries. It was useless. We loosened our tired hands, the lights were turned on, and we saw the Professor standing behind his wife. No one had noted his coming, and our priestess, looking up, said:—

"Ah! I understand why the spirits fled. Your defiance was resented. I wish you had stayed away a little longer!" The Professor bowed, and taking his wife's hand, exclaimed—

"Why, Kitty! Your hand is like ice, and you are shaking! Was it so exciting? What happened?"

Very soberly Mrs. Carlisle replied.

"Oh, Harold! My Mother came to me! She says that our voyage will be safe, but that we are not to stay in London for the season, and that we are not to go to Scotland at all. I could not find out why, nor where we are to go, but Harold, dear! We must give up our motor trip! Danger threatens!" The Professor threw back his head and laughed.

"Nonsense, Kitty! I didn't think you were so credulous! You forget that we are taking our own car, that I know all 'its tricks and its manners' and that I am much too cautious to take any risks. I am arranging this trip. You shall stay in London as long as you like, and we shall motor to Scotland *just as sure as*

I live, and I'm rather a healthy specimen," he concluded, striking his chest a resounding blow. Then, drawing a long delighted breath, he exclaimed —

"Oh, how delicious! Where are the violets? There is no flower that I love so well. Kitty," — pinching his wife's cheek — "if those meddlesome ghosts do kill me, remember I want heaps of violets on my casket."

Her startled, horrified cry —

"Oh, Harold! *Don't* joke about it!" touched him.

"Why, little wife! You mustn't let your nerves upset you in this way. I won't have it. A month hence you will laugh at these foolish fears," and he quoted — in ringing tones: —

"I am the *Master* of my fate!"

Our party broke up with loving, hopeful farewells, and our friends sailed the next day. A cablegram duly announced their safe arrival, and, as soon as possible, a letter followed from the Professor, detailing plans for what promised to be a gay and busy month in London. Mrs. Carlisle would write immediately, and the professor was glad to say that the sinister impression of that seance had vanished, since they had used the motor every day without the smallest mishap.

That night, I had a strangely vivid dream. I seemed to be in a hansom cab, driving rapidly through Piccadilly. I recognized St. James' Church, the Burlington Arcade and other familiar buildings, till the cab turned into Dover street, stopping at "Brown's," my favorite hostelry. The hall porter, usually ready with an eager welcome, greeted me with only a grave bow, and, without a word, preceded me, as if I were expected, to a room on the first floor. When he opened the door, a flood of violet perfume poured forth, and wondering, I entered a darkened chamber, where, weeping convulsively Mrs. Carlisle knelt beside *a casket heaped with violets!* No other flowers were visible. Masses of violets banked the mantel, violets, purple and white, filled great bowls, and on the breast of the dead Professor, lay a loose cluster of the long-stemmed Russian blossoms.

Choking with emotion, I went forward, only glancing at the calm majesty of our friend's fine face, and softly touched the head of the sobbing mourner. She started, raised her despair-

ing eyes, and stretched out her arms with a most pathetic, imploring gesture, when the overpowering fragrance seemed to make me faint, I felt myself reeling, and, flinging out my arms for some support, I struck one hand so sharply against the casket that the pain waked me. For an instant I could not understand where I was. The clocks just then chimed five, the gray dawn was creeping through my blinds, and I saw that I was in my own bed.

The dreadful dream had fled, but my hand ached smartly for in my dream I had dashed it against the night table, and my nerves were still quivering with the horror of the vision. Looking about, I drew a long shuddering sigh of relief, and murmuring, "Thank Heaven! Dreams go by contraries," I crushed the pillows round me and slept till broad daylight.

While I dressed, the details of the dream came back with such haunting insistence that I went at once to the library, flinging up the blinds to let the sunlight fall upon a fine pastel portrait of our dear "Professor." Oh, it was good to meet the kind laughing look in the painted eyes, to realize the perfection of the likeness! Such splendid, vigorous life, radiated from every line of the picture, that I smiled happily and turned to meet my husband's bright "Good Morning," feeling with Pippa, "*All's right with the world.*"

The morning mail had come, bringing a delightful letter from Mrs. Carlisle, which I read aloud. This was the closing sentence:

"We are both well and very happy, finding London and London friends as charming as ever, but Harold thinks we would better make our Scotch trip now, before the weather grows warmer, so we mean to start to-morrow, and we hope to be here again by the middle of May, when there will be one mad social rush till August. The motor behaves beautifully, and I am ashamed of my belief in that 'lying spirit.' No more *seances* for me, my dear!"

We both laughed at the assertion, and then, altogether reassured, I told "Tom" of my dream. While I was repeating it, something of its awful dismay and horror again seized me, and I finished shuddering, as I said:—

"Oh! it was too hideously real!"

"Nothing but too much rabbit, Honey!" he retorted, and I laughed, when there rang out a sharp report like a pistol shot. It sounded from the library, just across the hall. Tom dropped his newspaper and we both sprang to our feet, rushing from the room together. Everything in the library looked as usual, and we were completely mystified till we saw the Professor's portrait.

The heavy plate glass over the picture was evenly split from top to bottom, and only retained by the frame, which, while we gazed, gave way. The glass came crashing down, followed by the portrait, which fell on its face at our feet.

We stood aghast for an instant in stunned amazement. I know that I moaned, and I saw my husband grow white, as he carefully lifted the portrait, which was unharmed. The dear eyes still held their happy glance!

There was no accounting for the disaster in any reasonable way. The frame was unbroken! It had only loosened just enough to release the painting, but we could find no visible starting at the joints. It was so uncanny, so mysterious, that we left the room silently, strangely moved.

A loud peal of the door bell startled us afresh. My husband impulsively answered it, finding a messenger boy with this fatal cablegram:

"Brown's, Dover Street. Harold dead. Returning.
Arrive Saturday. HILDA."

That was all.

Just one month after that gay dinner, and that strange seance, we attended the Professor's funeral. Alas! His brave declaration—

"I am the Master of my fate!"

was as futile as so many of our human assertions prove to be.

When my poor friend could talk of her sorrow she said sadly:

"I never can bear to look at a motor now! Oh! My poor Harold! He so loved his life, and we were so happy, that I used to say Heaven could give no greater delight than we had. Why, Oh, why, did we not heed that warning? You know the brake failed to work!"

The haunting memory of my dream, with its vivid picture of that violet-filled room made me ask:—

“Did your London friends send flowers, as we do here?”

“Oh, yes, quantities of them, and curiously, every one sent violets. Do you remember how Harold loved them, and his request that his casket might be heaped with them? I placed a large cluster on his breast, and the casket was hidden as with a purple pall.”

Again I felt that chill which had marked our seance, and again the odor of violets turned me faint.



The Magic Music of Modena.*

BY BRADLEY GILMAN.



HEN Carlo Crivalli, the music-loving Syndic, or Mayor, of Modena, established the famous Crivalli Prizes, for musical composition, in 1878, he undoubtedly did a great service to the cause of music, in all that quarter of Italy; but, as the good man often said afterward, he regretted that out of the forty or fifty competitors who annually submitted original works, only three could possibly be successful and happy, while forty-seven or fifty-seven must perforce be disappointed and unhappy. Indeed, it was conceivable that in any year's competition one person might take all three of the prizes, and that would necessitate even more unhappiness to an even larger number. That is what nearly happened in the competition of 1903 — one competitor took the first two prizes, each 500 lire (100 dollars), and seemed likely to take the third, the "Grand Prize," of 1000 lire; but, — something else happened which prevented it.

In order to understand what it was that "happened" we must approach a little house of the Via della Pescheria, just across the Piazza Cenci, the first house on the left, and enter the fruit and vegetable shop of the ground-floor, as young Giuseppe Fiorentini entered it, early one morning in September of that year, 1903. A bright-eyed girl of about seventeen was sorting some figs, in a corner of the dim space, but, as soon as she saw him, she uttered a little cry of joy, hastily wiped her hands on her huge apron, flung both arms about his neck, and gave him an unreserved kiss of affection — which was entirely proper, inasmuch as she, Angolina Fontanella, was Giuseppe's "sposa," or fiancée.

After the impulsive embrace and kiss she held him by the

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shoulders, and looked more closely into his face. At once her own sympathetic face clouded. "What is it, Beppo? Why art thou so sad?" she cheerily demanded.

She waited not for him to respond, but chattered on, in a caressing tone, and smoothing his dark curly hair from his forehead: "Ah, but I know, Beppo; thou need'st not to tell me. It is the Crivalli prize — some stupid pig has been given it." And her face now expressed rage, with all the sudden passion of the Latin race. "I hate him — oh, I hate him. But who is he, Beppo caro?" And curiosity at once succeeded rage in her mobile countenance.

The young man was regarding her mournfully, silently. Now he raised a hand and slowly pointed upward, and, as her large, dark eyes grew larger in surprise, he said, "Yes, he — your uncle — no other."

Angolina threw up her arms in protest. "He? That one? He has no soul; he is only an artisan; he loves queer art-objects, and no more; he —"

Giuseppe lifted his finger to correct her: "Yet loves something more." He said, firmly, and, as the girl's puzzled face lighted with quick perception, he nodded and pronounced the word "Money."

"Yes, money — always money," echoed Angolina. "That is his deity — all those beautiful and rare objects, up in the garret-room, even the quaint musical instruments — are worth only money to him; not from love of the beautiful has he left to me, more and more, the care of this shop; he now buys and sells what brings him more yellow gold than do figs and oranges. But tell me, Beppo, how didst thou hear about the award? What sort of composition could my miserly, cruel old uncle produce? Bah! he has no genius, as thou hast, mio caro."

Giuseppe walked restlessly about the dim little shop, and Angolina stood in a charming pose, leaning on a box of lemons. "Nay," but he has a singular insight or inspiration in his themes, the judges say; and some fair technical skill in developing them. One who got a glance at the score of his fugue told me that it shows merit; a weird character it has. All the judges recognized its originality, and agreed in bestowing the prize;

one, only, was reluctant, because he sensed an uncanny quality in the thing; he grew pale and nearly fainted, they say, when the piece was played; and others of the judges were conscious of strange emotions in themselves as they listened. Still, the prize is awarded; that suffices; no more need be said. I had hoped, *Nina mia*" (and his voice grew tender and sad), "to gain this prize; for, with that, we might have ventured —"

The sympathetic creature threw her arms about her lover's neck and kissed him re-assuringly. "We will be patient, *Riccioluto* (curly-head); we are still young, thou and I; but what thou saidst about the weird quality of my wicked uncle's fugue makes me think — and remember and wonder; for I have peeped into his closed work-shop, up there in the roof, although he has forbade me; and I have seen him doing strange things; I — I — I begin to understand what his singular actions might mean;" and she pondered, in the prettiest fashion imaginable, with her shapely hand propping her round chin.

After a little she answered her lover's inquiring gaze: "I have peeped through a chink in the wooden wall, *Beppo*, several times — and once I stole in, when he had left the door unlocked. I have seen his hard, cruel face eagerly bent over one or another of his strange mechanisms, some of them fashioned by his ingenious brain and clever hand; one was a tiny platform, like that *Planchette* device, which the conjuror used, you remember, at the *Verona* fair; and there was, also, a large roulette-board; at least it looked like one. I recall that its base was marked out like a music-staff and, too, he has a kind of altar or shrine, in the room, with all sorts of queer figures, — wooden and metal, triangles and squares, hanging around it; and in a crucible, on the altar, he sometimes burns strange aromatic roots and gums."

As she thus recounted what she had seen in the mysterious room, her voice lowered more and more, until she spoke only in an awed whisper, ending, "Oh, *Beppo*, I wonder, — can it be possible — that he is in league — with *Diabolus*? I certainly did see a dreadful figure, on a parchment, behind the shrine; it was like the body of a goat, and had a face like the *Evil One*."

Giuseppe became thoughtful; he carried a belief in evil spir

its in his very blood; he pondered her suggestion. "Surely the fugue was wonderful, yet fiendish," so one judge had declared. "I wonder, Nina, if what you say can be possible?"

"Oh, it is too bad," ejaculated Angolina, now quite accepting the theory of Satanic assistance, and rebellious solely at the award. "And only think, Beppo! I burned candles and said prayers before three saints, in the Duomo. Ah, they could do little, poor dear saints, against the Prince of Darkness."

Giuseppe still reflected. Presently he said, in all the simplicity of his nature, — Latin and artistic, — "That would, indeed, explain the marvel, Nina. If Diabolus gave him a theme, original, remarkable, and he worked it out, in a free style, that would produce about the kind of composition which this fantastic fugue is said to be. I wonder, now — I wonder."

Again the impetuous sympathetic girl embraced him, smoothed his forehead, and counselled, "But cheer up, my Beppo. There is the second prize, next month. Try for that. Thou shall work hard with thy keen brain, and I — I — thy poor little stupid one, will burn twice as many candles and say twice as many prayers, in the Duomo; yea, I will try other saints; mayhap I shall hit upon stronger ones, this time."

So there was much kissing and caressing, until a cross-looking old woman stumbled in upon them, demanding carrots and turnips; whereupon sentiment was thrust aside, and prose reigned in the little shop. Afterward, with one more kiss, Giuseppe went away, to ponder upon his composition for the second prize.

The days passed, and the weeks. Old Adolfo Spinelli, Angolina's uncle, avaricious, soulless collector and composer, went shuffling about the house, and along the narrower lanes and alleys — he seemed to shun the open sun-lit streets — and, as he passed along, muttering, and with half-shut eyelids, the children fled from his path, and whispered together that he had the "Evil Eye."

Angolina kept as busily as possible — and cleverly, too — at her buying and selling. She was earlier than anybody at the market, in the Piazza Popolo, and many a prayer she said — as she purchased her fruits and vegetables and flowers, and transported them to the little shop — that this and that saint

would make her purchases and sales profitable, so that she and Beppo might soon marry, even if—even if he did not—but then! He would succeed! the next prize would certainly be his! And, despite her many cares and duties, she found time to go, often, to the Duomo, where she said so many prayers in so many chapels, and burned so many candles before so many shrines, that her friends were puzzled by her increased devotion.

As for Giuseppe, he also was very busy. He had his practising and teaching, beside his all-important composition for the second contest. He secluded himself much. Angolina saw him but little, and his friends saw him even less. He had, too, an engagement to play, through several small towns, during one week.

Thus the time passed, and the month was about over. When he returned from his tour, Angolina met him, breathless with excitement, and had much to tell him. They walked along the avenues of the "Water-Garden." When they were quite alone, under the plane-trees and among the acacia-shrubs she told him what had happened. "O Beppo, I have seen strange and dreadful things," she began, and stared, with large eyes all about her, and clung to his hand. "I have seen my wicked uncle in league with the Wicked One himself. I looked through the keyhole of the garret, and—and—but let me begin at the beginning."

Here she drew a long breath, and collected herself. "During the first week he seemed much absorbed in his thoughts. He was cross when he stumbled over me, for usually he seemed not to see me; then he went away for two days, out into the country; when he returned, he brought with him several wicker cages, and in each cage were several little owls. Singular, was it not, Beppo? But thou shalt hear more and stranger things.

"He turned the little owls loose, in the long raftered garret; and then I saw that he had stretched cords,—Oh, the shrewd one!—across the garret at one end, so that they formed a veritable music-staff; he hung food for the little owls on these cords, and, by scolding them from the other parts of the room, in a few days he had them trained to fly thither whenever they were frightened."

Giuseppe's eyes were fixed upon his "Sposa" as she talked,

and now his face lighted up. "Ah, dear one, I begin to understand his magic arts; but not wholly do I understand."

"Wait, Beppo, and thou shalt know all!" she answered, with agitation. "Much of the time when he was in the place he was poring over a huge leather-covered book, with iron clasps. It had a padlock, and he always locked it when he left. Well, one day, a week ago, he seemed especially excited, and he made ready the brazier on that evil altar, and hung and re-hung the horrid banners and scrolls, many times. He seemed to seek some particular grouping for them. Then he dressed himself in a long red gown, with gold embroidery, which he took from his great oak chest, and he stood before the brazier, and waved his hands and bowed himself, and seemed to mutter prayers to that fierce, monstrous devil-figure on the banner, and threw upon the live coals substances which sent up dense fumes, so that I could hardly see across the room. Finally, as I crouched at the keyhole, he seized a brazen drum, and beat it, leaping around the room with an unnatural agility."

Giuseppe listened, open-mouthed and breathless. "He is surely in league—" was his exclamation, but Angolina interrupted.

"I could not see clearly, yet dimly I saw the little round-faced owls fly, all, to the stretched cords; and, as they alighted, I almost screamed out, in wonder and terror, for they perched there, in a certain order of grouping; and, with their little round faces, they looked exactly like notes on a music-staff."

"O Nina, O Nina!" burst out her eager sympathetic listener. "I understand now the dreadful secret of his magical art."

"Yes, yes! And he now quickly caught up a piece of music-paper, and, still muttering what must have been evil charms, my wicked uncle quickly transferred the melody, the theme, thus diabolically given him, to the paper."

The agitated girl trembled, and broke into sobs, whereupon her devoted lover put his arm about her and kissed her, reassuringly. "Fear not, little one!" he counselled. "You are in no peril—I, your Beppo, am here."

Presently she recovered herself, a little, and resumed: "That tells the secret, Beppo caro. Twice more that wicked old man

went through his awful incantation, and each time he transferred a motif, a theme, to his paper. Now we know whence come his mysterious and diabolic themes, which he works out, — poorly, I doubt not, for he is no real musician, — into his wild compositions. Ah, what chance hast thou, my love, my life — even though thou art a true artist — against the power of the Evil One! And to what good was it that I said the prayers and burned the candles before the saints. Yes, even before the altar of Saint Christopher, the Strong One! Even he cannot avail against the Prince of Darkness.” And the exhausted girl sobbed, and clung fast to her lover’s arm.

Poor, downcast Giuseppe led her along the leafy paths, trying to quiet and comfort her. As they came out into the bright sunshine, they both breathed more freely, and the young man ventured, “Perhaps, Nina dear — perhaps — at least is it possible, thinkest thou, that those same noxious fumes and odors, which came to thy nostrils, partly stupefied thee, or bewildered thy spirit, and made thee dream unrealities?”

“No, no!” cried the girl, confidently. “I know what I saw; I was quite myself, and clear-eyed as ever. I crept away from the door, and down to the shop, and soon was selling the carrots and the turnips, as always. No, Beppo Mia, it was no dream; it was all as I have told it.”

Thus, as hardly needs detailing, the second prize was won by the evil old man. His composition was a fantastic “Danse Macabre;” and it threw the sensitive member of the group of judges into a swoon, while nearly all the others came through it with staring eyes, and bated breath. They were held spell-bound by its gruesome suggestiveness; and one afterward affirmed that as it was being played to them on the piano, by a skilled musician, he smelt sulphur in the air, and was half sure that he caught glimpses of a tall, grayish cloud-like form, in a corner of the hall, swaying fantastically in time with the weird music. Still, it was undoubtedly a wonderful composition, and although the judges mentioned, with warm approval, the “Cingalese Suite,” which Giuseppe Fiorentini submitted, the prize must go to strange old Adolfo Spinelli, he of the shaggy brows and half-shut eyes.

But there was still another prize to be awarded, a month later; and, after little Angolina had recovered her nerve and her customary hopefulness of nature, she encouraged Giuseppe to make this third attempt. "Pluck up heart," she smiled at him, as he came slowly into the little shop, and she fastened a red rose in her hair, and threw a kiss across to him, over the bowed back of an old crone who was sourly examining some plums.

"Try once more, Beppo!" she enjoined, as the old dame went out — and she danced across, among the boxes and baskets, and curtsied playfully before him.

There was a bright confident light in her clear eyes, as Giuseppe looked listlessly into them, which made him suddenly wonder. She quickly answered his questioning look, putting her finger to her red lips as a caution, and whispering her words :

"Try yet again, Mio Caro ! I have stolen away the big black book."

And, as he started, with astonishment and anxiety, she ran nervously on, yet bravely, "Yes, I have stolen it from him; it is safely hidden — Oh, where do you think ?"

"But Nina, O my Ninetta," exclaimed Giuseppe. "Thy uncle will know thee for the culprit; and he will lay cruel vindictive hands upon thee, and —"

But the blithe creature was shaking her head, slowly, firmly, persistently, with laughter in her eyes. "Never fear, thou! I have averted all that." Then she half choked with laughter, as she whispered, "I took the awful volume — that book of Diabolus — I took it up carefully with tongs, tied it in paper with strong twine, and carried it, Ah, you could never guess." Then with a triumphant burst of sunshine in her great black eyes, "I carried it, one evening, to the Duomo, and I put it in the tiny closet under the great altar. There, now!" And she stood back, and claimed a meed of praise for her efforts. "It certainly will exert no evil influence in that place."

Giuseppe's face showed clearly his pride in her daring and her resourcefulness, and he stepped toward her, to give loving expression thereof; but she put him away, saying "Listen! I have not finished; be not anxious! I bought a little sulphur, and burned it, with a lot of paper, on the altar; there, now,

when he sees the ashes and smells the sulphur, he will feel sure where it has gone."

Then there was no holding him off, longer. He plunged at her, recklessly, and covered her red cheeks and laughing lips with warm kisses.

Still, before them lay the month of anticipation and hope, and the possibility of success. "A thousand lire." "Ah, with *that* two loving hearts might venture to begin a home for themselves. So, with fresh zeal, Giuseppe set himself to his task. He had a symphony already roughly outlined in his mind but had not felt the courage, before, to work it out. Now he felt a strength, as of ten men, in his one youthful heart. He began the Andante movement that evening.

As for Angolina, although she felt that she had undermined the enemy's stronghold, she did not give over the prayers and candles, and, without appearing to do so, she watched her hateful old uncle closely. He certainly was ill at ease. He ate little, he muttered constantly, he clenched and opened his big, bony hands without ceasing.

One week passed, and yet another. The little owls had escaped, at night, by a window, left open—purposely or by accident. Old Adolfo seemed busy, yet somewhat aimless, in the great rambling garret. Then she discovered that he had laid a long wooden track along the rafters overhead. He seemed to have found some suggestions in another smaller parchment book, which he brought out of the oak chest. He next painted on the long wooden track a musical staff. Evidently he was grimly and desperately determined to attempt some other occult and diabolic method of getting hold of weird themes. Later, he brought into the garret something which looked—as Angolina peeped cautiously through the keyhole—like a short, stout heavy cylindrical block of wood, much like a short cannon, or mortar; there was some clockwork connected with it, by which it could oscillate rapidly, standing where he had carefully placed it, under the wooden track, and moving in continuous line with it.

There was much about this infernal device which the young girl could not fathom, but one night she suspected, by her surly uncle's restlessness, that matters were coming to a head. He

did not go to bed at the usual time, and looked often at his watch, and she could detect curses and blasphemies on his wicked old lips.

At about eleven o'clock he stamped up into the garret, and the eager, excited girl followed, and stationed herself at the keyhole.

She saw him array himself in a grotesque black robe, decorated with figured red and black devils. He appeared to have prepared the strange cannon or mortar, beforehand; and he now devoted his attention to the altar, burning aromatic resins and gums, and studying hard over certain parchments and charts. Then he drew a knife from his pocket, made a slight incision in his arm, and with a pen, drew certain circles and triangles on one of the charts, in his own blood. After this he carefully prepared a quaint bottle-pipe, or narghile, and seated himself, with a violin, playing fantastic runs and cadences, meanwhile smoking vehemently. The room grew dense with gray fumes, and the odor was most repulsive, — even the little which came to the agitated girl at the keyhole. Then he touched a lever, and Angolina noticed that the singular mortarlike object was now oscillating rapidly. At times he paused, and chanted some occult charm, or formula, made up of strange harsh words, which she could not understand, and his face, under the influence of the drugs on the altar and in the bubbling pipe, became flushed and distorted, and dreadful to look upon.

Now he began the wild strains of Tartini's famous "Devil's Sonata." Little Nina, cowering at the keyhole, recognized its unearthly measures, she gasped under her pent-up excitement, her eyes almost bursting from their sockets, and she could hardly keep from fainting, then and there. She noticed, at the moment, a great gray rat, which ran out into the middle of the room, and raised itself on its hind legs, keeping time to the infernal strains; and, what was that? — A monstrous splay spider lowered himself from the rafter, and hung just above the now frenzied player's head.

She was torn by an excitement almost uncontrollable. She clasped her hands over her throbbing heart, and — then there came a tremendous explosion; she lost consciousness; she knew no more.

When the neighbors, aroused by the terrific explosion, broke their way into the crazy old house, and rushed up through it, they found Angolina, unconscious, but breathing; they found the door burst out by the explosion, and the windows also; and, within, they found the mangled, lifeless body of the evil old man, in the midst of the débris of his diabolic orgy.

From what Giuseppe could study out, in the chaos of the room, and what his Nina narrated to him, in trembling whispers, the next morning, the young composer understood that old Adolfo had planned to summon some demon or demons of the infernal abyss, by charms and incantations, and, by their influence, to spread along the wooden track, or music-staff, another of his occult malign themes. There were pellets of some adhesive substance clinging to the rafters, but in utter disorder, and as for the old necromancer, he had certainly been killed instantly, by the bursting of his mysterious engine of divination.

So that was what "happened," preventing crafty, cruel old Adolfo Spinelli from taking the third of the Crivalli prizes, in the year 1903, as he probably would have done, if he could have laid hold, by his magic arts, of another weird theme.

The symphony, which Giuseppe offered, received the award, among forty competitors; and, — what was more unexpected, — the death of the rich old uncle placed in his niece's hands the bulk of his hoarded fortune — some fifty thousand lire, which sum, you may be sure, made a most acceptable nest-egg for the devoted young couple, as they established their home, and as Giuseppe climbed upward, on the ladder of fame.



Under the Sacred Bo-Tree.*

BY MICHAEL WHITE.



“**W**OULD the *mem sahib* like to hear why she should be careful not to harm a butterfly? *Ahi!* I will tell her if she wishes.”

It was the East speaking to the West, and both were beautiful after their kind.

The East stood in the full blaze of an Indian sun, with the embroidered end of her crimson *sari* drawn over her head, and the rest of her single garment falling in graceful folds to the rings of gold and silver, clasped around her ankles. If the white dust encroached upon her bare feet, she carried her brow aloft in the pose of a classic goddess.

But there was more than pose in her of the East. The East stood thus by right of long inheritance, and it was not the thing of yesterday over which she claimed dominion. When she looked at the West out of eyes unfathomable, it was as one who had seen deep into the universal mystery.

Of the morning glory on the Roof of the World, of the hidden places of the sea where strange creatures work in darkness, yes, even of the Valley of the Shadow and whence it leadeth, perhaps she could tell.

As she spoke there hovered upon the corners of her lips and the lashes of her long, narrow, half-closed eyes, a smile; but whether of scorn or desire, of sadness or satisfaction, its subtlety would have left a painter helpless before his canvas.

In the veil with which her fingers played was symbolized the mystery of her Oriental nature.

Though she stood but a pace or two distant, her voice fell in soft cadences like an echo; the echo of strife and passion, and the whirlwinds rending the human earth in the far off ages.

Perhaps she had witnessed the path of Timur, it may be she

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had stood alone of her kindred when the Terror had swept over the land by night, and the memory of such things lingered with her through many reincarnations.

And the West. She sat a trim, white figure in the shade of a bo or pipul tree. Above her head the glossy heart-shaped leaves quivered and spun ceaselessly on their long tendrils, even in the still air; flashing and pattering together when any faint breeze stirred.

Never for a moment do the leaves of that tree rest, because under them Gautama proclaimed the mutability of all things human. At least so hath tradition.

And the West looked at the East with eyes full of resolve and confidence. For her was the future, not the past. No blood red hand of Timur, Mohammed of Ghor, or Nadir Shah stretched across her mental vision, and the recollection of plague and carnage was not in her being.

She was of the newest born among types of womanly beauty, and before her on Fifth Avenue the stranger is proud to uncover his head.

Her gaze was set eagerly forward, with hope instead of a caste mark on her brow.

Thus had these two come together, the East and the West, at the sacred bo-tree.

"Would the *mem sahib* like to hear?" the East repeated her question.

"Yes," the West smiled and nodded frankly. "I shall be glad to listen."

"*Ohè, mem sahib,*" began the East, "it was a long time ago that this thing happened. It was many years before the *Feringhee Sahibs* came to India, before Shah Jehan sat on the Peacock Throne, yes, in the days when only Hindu kings and princes reigned.

"In that age there was a queen ruling over her own state. She was a great queen, strong in mind and hand. Mounted on her elephant she had led her troops to victory, and tigers had fallen beneath her spear.

"Great were her renown and riches. In her palace were halls of marble adorned with precious stones, baths of silver in which

fountains of perfumed water splashed, and cool pavilions set in gardens of delight.

“ Yet this queen, O *mem sahib*, was not satisfied. Always her spirit went forth in quest of something, she knew not what. Choice fruit was brought to her from Kabul, and snow of the Himalayas for her sherbets, but in such things she took no pleasure. Even in her sleep she could not rest, her spirit wandering forth in search of that unknown something.

“ And at that time, where the *mem sahib* now sits in the shade of the bo-tree, the Lord Gautama rested. After many wanderings and privations he had become Buddha the Enlightened. All things were revealed to him. He was of the air, the fire, and the water, and every living creature did him reverence.”

The East raised her arm with a jingle of bangles and pointed upward.

“ The *mem sahib* will see,” she went on, “ that the leaves of the bo-tree still tremble, because Gautama found shelter and knowledge under its branches. So great a thing was this that happened under the bo-tree.

“ And as the Lord Buddha rested, a butterfly came fluttering hither and thither in search of something. Neither the *mem sahib* nor I could have known what the butterfly sought, but before Buddha there were no secrets. In the butterfly he saw the restless spirit of the queen, and he knew the source of her unhappiness.

“ So Buddha beckoned to the butterfly, and it came and clung to his finger. Then Buddha bent over and breathed upon the insect, changing its nature but not its form. He gave to the butterfly a new life, and blessing it, sent it back to the great queen.

“ And lo! O *mem sahib*, when the great queen came out of the dark night, she found resting on her arm the fulfillment of that which her spirit sought. And she cried in her joy, ‘ O heart of my heart, life of my life, *Hai Babaji*, desire of my desire !’

“ Does the *mem sahib* understand what the Lord Buddha sent on the butterfly’s wing for the great queen’s happiness ? That is why one should never harm a butterfly, lest it be a new life blessed

by the Lord Buddha, a child spirit searching for its protecting arm."

To be sure it was a mere legend, a fairy tale as some would call it. But yet — the figure of the Lord Buddha, sitting under the shimmering, trembling leaves of the bo-tree, to this day looms impressively across a vast continent. Moreover in this instance the West looked at the East and understood. Perhaps in the Great Desire the East and West had met, while separated in all else by a gulf of ages.



The Man Who Dreamed the Future.*

BY JOHN PATRICK.



AT first the dreams were hazy and uncertain; but they gradually became more definite until, every night while he slept, Arthur Lawson dreamed of some event that was to form a portion of his life upon the morrow. Often it would be merely an outline of a trifling incident that would pass through his brain to remain unnoticed until its actual repetition during the following day fixed it definitely in his mind. On other occasions the nightly vision would foretell, with the fullest detail, some important and unexpected happening.

For many weeks Lawson looked upon the fulfilment of these dreams as mere coincidences; but their persistent accuracy ultimately brought him to realize that he was actually dreaming the future. Then a great terror seized him and he knew instinctively that the night would come when he would experience his own death in a dream and awaken in the morning, for the last time, forced to wait and watch for its fulfilment. He fought in vain against the terror that oppressed him; but, after many weeks of dread, he consulted a medical man.

He was told that he was the victim of a peculiar habit that he himself must conquer. The advice he received was that when he lay down to sleep he was to concentrate his mind upon some utterly fantastical happening, in the hope that it might form the subject of a dream. He was assured that if he could dream of something that could not possibly come to pass the spell would be broken and the prophetic dreams would not recur.

That night Lawson lay awake until the early hours endeavoring to imagine that he was defending himself with a revolver against a horde of savages. Eventually, with this thought foremost in his mind, he fell into a restless sleep from which he awakened at dawn overjoyed to find that he had dreamed a strange and remarkable dream.

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The first portion of it was entirely unintelligible, but some of the details were strikingly vivid. Lawson had been conscious that a bullet had whistled close to his head and he had seized a revolver that lay near. He had looked up to find a great, burly ruffian towering above him, revolver in hand. In that one dramatic moment Lawson had noted that the man's nose was strangely twisted and that across the lower part of his forehead was a livid scar. As the stranger was raising his revolver again, Lawson had fired quickly and the man had spun half round on his heels, to fall suddenly backwards with outstretched arms.

Lawson went to the bank next morning with a light heart, for he felt that he had dreamed a dream that could not possibly be repeated in real life. Early in the afternoon, however, as he sat in his room pondering over his strange affliction, a thick and strangely familiar voice broke suddenly in upon his meditations.

"Give me a million dollars!" it demanded.

Before Lawson could look up a bullet sang in his ears, followed by the crash of an explosion. The sting of powder burnt on his face as he ducked suddenly and began to grope in the right-hand drawer of his desk for the loaded revolver he always kept there. The smoke above him drifted away and, looking up, he beheld the huge form of a man in whose eyes there blazed the light of madness. The stranger's features were hideously distorted. His nose was flattened and twisted out of shape and across his forehead, just above the eyebrows, there was an ugly, bluish scar. These details flashed upon Lawson instantaneously; then, as the maniac's revolver began to move up, he fired quickly. The man swung half round, and sank slowly backwards, falling, with outstretched arms, lifeless on the red carpet.

The unexpected fulfilment of the seemingly impossible dream caused Lawson to lay his peculiar case before a nerve specialist.

"You must get away from yourself," the expert advised. "Go away to another town. Change your outlook on life — disguise yourself — forget who you are and, if necessary, take another name. Think new thoughts, banish from your mind everything that binds you to the present and probably at the end of a month you will find that you are cured."

Late that afternoon, without a word of warning to any one,

Lawson left the bank and caught the evening train for Melton, a large town ninety miles west of Eastport. On arrival there he purchased a false beard, a pair of blue glasses, a new suit and a black, soft felt hat. Having put on these effective disguises he booked a room at the Hotel Metropole under the name of Ivor Penton and began to act the part of an escapee from justice. The remainder of the evening he spent in slinking down side streets imagining that he was being hounded by the police. Towards midnight he had supper at a questionable restaurant and returned to his hotel after having succeeded in forgetting himself for more than three hours.

He retired to rest quite satisfied with the progress he felt he was making; but in the silent hours of the morning he awakened suddenly and sat up in bed with terror clutching at his heart. In his brain there remained the impression of a vivid dream. He had been traveling in a railway car and had suddenly experienced the severe jolt of a collision. He had heard plainly the crash and rending of steel and timber as the cars telescoped; and, after a period of unconsciousness, he had seen his own body, mangled and lifeless, lying amongst the debris that strewn the track.

He switched on the light and sat trembling, with his face and hands clammy from perspiration, and his throat parched and burning. He felt that the inexorable hand of Fate was reaching out for him and he knew that the coming day would be his last. He pondered for a few minutes while some of the main incidents in his life passed swiftly through his brain. Suddenly, however, he laughed aloud and, reaching for the switch, plunged the room into darkness. As he lay down again a great feeling of security came over him, for he saw a way of escape. That dream was his salvation. It placed matters entirely in his own hands for, on the morrow, he could make it impossible of fulfilment by avoiding all trains for the day.

He arose early the following morning and put on his disguises. The feeling that he was absolute master of his own destiny dominated his thoughts and he could have cried aloud from sheer joy. After breakfast, in order to thoroughly assure himself that there was not the remotest possibility of the dream coming true, he

went down to the Grand Central Station and idly watched half a dozen trains depart. Then he started out on foot to see the sights of the city. Secure in his disguise he loitered where he pleased and entirely forgot for the time being that such a person as Arthur Lawson, the bank director, existed.

During the whole morning he played his part successfully; but towards mid-day his optimism began to desert him and a strange, uncertain feeling took its place. After a time this developed into the conviction that his movements were being watched and, try as he would, he could not banish this idea from his thoughts. Soon he walked purposely down a side street and in a few minutes he was conscious of the fact that two men were loitering forty yards behind. He turned abruptly into another street but the men continued to keep him in view. He rejoined the throng on a busy thoroughfare and, by stopping to look in a jeweler's window, discovered that the men were still following.

Irritated by this unwelcome attention he entered a café and sat down at an unoccupied table. The waiter had scarcely taken his order, however, when the two strangers followed and seated themselves opposite. While they partook of a light meal they discussed banking questions; and, after several vain attempts, they succeeded in drawing Lawson into the conversation. Before he was aware of what he was doing, he was defending a mode of banking procedure with which the two others professed to disagree.

Ultimately, after some argument, Lawson chanced to state that he was a bank official. This caused him to remember that he should be playing another part; so he arose abruptly, paid his bill and hurriedly left the café. He was decidedly un-nerved and once outside he was faced with the necessity of doing something that would help him to forget in the meantime who he really was. He pulled his hat well down over his eyes and glanced furtively along the street. Then a hand was laid lightly on his shoulder and he turned quickly to find himself facing the two strangers.

"Arthur Lawson, you are under arrest," one of them said. "You'd better come quietly."

At the police station he learned the reason for it all. The previous day Henslow, the cashier of the bank at Eastport, had

absconded, leaving behind a deficiency of eighty thousand dollars. Lawson's simultaneous disappearance had caused him to be coupled with the defaulting cashier.

Before the court he protested that he was innocent and explained that he had left Eastport under doctor's orders. But the circumstantial evidence against him was overwhelming. His abrupt and unannounced departure, his disguise and his change of name all went to make up a strong case against him. He was not dismayed, however, for he knew that the evidence of the specialist he had consulted would be sufficient to set him free; and he felt satisfied when he was remanded to Eastport. It was not until he learned that he was to be taken back, in charge of a detective, by the 4.40 express that afternoon that the horror of his position dawned upon him.

He appealed to the detective who was to accompany him, but the man merely smiled. He pleaded next with the superintendent and told the story of the dream without effect. The superintendent was a practical man who had no faith in dreams. Lawson realized then that it was useless to struggle against Fate; but the knowledge that he was helpless drove him into a frenzy. He fought viciously when they attempted to take him from the cell, and it needed the united efforts of four men to get him into the prison van. At the railway station he fought again with renewed and almost superhuman strength, and he had to be placed in the van handcuffed and with his legs bound. Before the train started he calmed down, for he saw that, in spite of all he could do, he was predestined to make that journey.

* * * * *

The wreck of the 4.40 p. m. east-bound express, between Melton and Eastport, is a matter of history. In that disaster Arthur Lawson met his death. His unequal conflict with Fate ended in defeat, but only by the narrowest of margins; for, shortly after the train left Melton on the fatal journey, his innocence was established by the arrest and confession of Henslow, the absconding cashier.



In the Matter of Prophecy.*

BY MILTON PRICE HARLEY.



YOU know the type, Mrs. Ford," continued the captain, "extremely dark, fine featured, oily black hair, black turban and sunshade, peddling silks and shawls in the summer hotels, always quiet, always intelligent, always mysterious."

Janet nodded eager assent. She had long felt a certain awe and horror of these dark visitors from the Far East. She was intensely interested. The bright day and splendid blue of the ocean, the tanned and sturdy Captain in his blue uniform, the clean white of the bridge, and below them the deep hum of the ship, made a strange setting for the story, strong in its vivid contrast.

"Well, I finally told him what I wanted, as though he did not know already. It seemed that I would dream (he explained this) some vital circumstance in my own life — right, or not right, depending on my mental condition, whether my mind was submissive to his entirely or only partially.

"He lit some peculiar incense on a table directly in front of me. I remember him sitting opposite me, holding my attention with those black eyes of his, and the sickening fumes from the incense curling up between us. Then I grew faint and drowsy and lost myself in a sort of mist.

"That was all. I never knew I slept until he woke me up. But in that interval, Mr. Ford, I lived through the loss of the *Tuscan*, down to the slightest detail as it occurred two weeks later."

The Captain gazed off into the pale north, thoughtfully.

"That happened nine years ago, and until this passage I have never seen him again. You can understand, there-

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fore, how it stirred me to find him on board here."

"What a strange, strange experience!" Janet backed to the rail, crowding close to her husband. "Why, Harrison, think what it means, dear —"

The Captain was speaking again, and she turned to him with troubled eyes, while Harrison held her gently.

"So I must ask you, Mr. Ford, not to repeat the story. A thing like that does not look well in the reports."

Harrison Ford was not deeply impressed with the Captain's story. He was a tall, lean man of thirty-eight, intelligent and self-composed far beyond the ordinary, and of pleasant and forceful personality. From his college days his easy, logical strength had impressed, swayed, over-ruled, until now he stood alone, the head of a tremendous corporation, a figure known and respected in the highest business circles of New York and Boston.

He was, in his quiet, steady way, a philosopher. He looked invariably on the bright side of things, or he simply did not look. He aimed always at the normal. His trained mind thrust aside as unworthy of consideration, the extreme, the mysterious, the unnatural, both in business and in his private life. He always thought of Janet more as a child than in any other light — one to be amused, humored, and brought up carefully and unobtrusively to his own standard of mentality. On the other hand, his entire life was focused on her. It was for her that he was what he was. It was through her that he was enabled to maintain his high standard of life.

Actually, to a limited degree, Janet was a child for her years. She had a vivid imagination to which she often gave free rein. She was a dreamer always, impractical, impressionable. She was far from being egotistical, never realizing her own powers of attraction, even in her ability to interest herself. Harrison was her ideal, a man alone, of all men. She never hoped to attain to his scope of mind; she was absolutely happy in her ability to love, admire, and idolize him.

Her finely strung nature was keenly sensitive to the beauty and vividness of life. She loved nature, and especially she loved the sea. Under its influence she was transported into ecstasies of feeling, grave or gay, as the mood of the ocean. The sharp

contrasts of life, its mysteries and tragedies, thrilled and interested her intensely. She was young — much younger than Harrison — and she did not wish to grow old, to lose her sharp imagination, or her acute sense of appreciation. Her love for Harrison was her harbor of refuge from which she could look out into those wonders of life, unafraid, could loose her imagination fearlessly in its mysteries. Captain Anderson's story made a deep impression on her. While Harrison put it from his thoughts as inexplicable and unnatural, Janet lost herself completely in its strangeness.

During the next few days her mind dwelt incessantly on the subject. She chattered of it to Harrison, who listened tolerantly, amused at her enthusiasm and interest. He thought it would not endure for long. The *Liverpool* sped steadily eastward through glorious weather, and Janet, always on deck in the September sunlight, dreamed under the spell of the sea. Contrary to Harrison's opinion, her moods accentuated, rather than diminished in her mind the reality and mystery of the story. She watched the Hindoo from the promenade deck. She saw the somber eyes, the sphinx-like face, the clean-cut profile like a silhouette, on the deck below. And she resolved deep in her heart that he should tell her fortune, make her dream a page from her own future life, before the voyage was ended.

Harrison opposed the plan strongly, not because it broke the rules under which he lived — Janet was often exempt from them — but that he feared she would have a disagreeable experience. She, however, was clever. She knew how to handle him, and win him over, when she wished to, far better than he suspected. She enlisted Captain Anderson on her side:

“I would like to see it done, Mr. Ford, not that I doubt myself, understand, but I would like to see some one else try it. Mrs. Ford is so happy, and you are so comfortably fixed in life, surely nothing bad can come of it.”

The Hindoo was willing (Janet brought about the interview). It seemed he had noticed the lady. He thought there was something, he was not sure — no, he would take nothing for his services. So Harrison gave reluctant consent, and the Captain made the arrangements.

They assembled in the tiny saloon reserved for use of the officers. It was far aft, beyond the galley, and could be reached only by members of the ship's company. As a further precaution against disturbance the Captain locked the door on the inside.

"It is most important that no one shall ever hear of this." He spoke nervously. "As important as it was in the case of the *Tuscan*." Nine years had failed to quiet his agitation in the presence of this man.

"I understand," said the Hindoo, with strong accent. He stood quietly with folded arms, facing the little group at the far side of the table. Janet caught the glimmer of white teeth between the black lips when he spoke. She was terribly nervous. Her mind and brain seemed hopelessly confused. She tried in vain to regain her composure. But always she found herself gazing with growing horror at that somber figure and inscrutable countenance across the table, whose eyes seemed to encounter no barrier when they met hers. Harrison, mechanically fingering an unlit cigarette, for once felt the situation beyond his control. He deeply regretted that he had sanctioned the thing, he even feared its results, but he felt powerless to intervene.

"We are ready, then?" Again the accent. Janet nodded weakly. "If your mind does not submit entirely to mine, your dream may not be accurate. There are influences here." He looked at Harrison. "It would be better if we were alone."

"Never!" exclaimed Harrison. The Hindoo acquiesced with a bow.

He seated her at the table, and instructed the two men to remain quiet at the end of the room. Taking a chair directly opposite Janet he produced a capsule and a small brass plate which he placed midway between them. Then turning toward the Captain and Harrison, who were silently watching him, he said:

"Remember, do not interrupt for any reason whatever. It is dangerous to the subject."

With his attention concentrated on Janet, he carefully lighted the capsule, which sent up a thin spiral of smoke. It smoldered and glowed on the little square of brass, while the smoke drifted about in the slight air-currents. Janet sat motionless, chin in

her hands, her eyes held by the unwinking stare of the Hindoo. The penetrating incense, rapidly surrounding her, calmed her, soothed her, numbed her sensibilities. She grew less conscious of the dark face opposite her. She thought of Harrison. She could not quite picture him in her mind. She half recalled that she ought not to think of Harrison. Why must she not, she wondered vaguely. And how dim he seemed in her memory, how unreal! The smoke curled up more and more thickly. She could not see through it — She could no longer speak — She was suffocating! If she could only reach Harrison! She flung herself forward. She tried to grasp his coat. Her fingers would not close. She felt him slipping away from her, away, away.

* * * * *

Midsummer at a watering-place on the Atlantic Coast of the Middle Atlantic States; afternoon of a melancholy and forboding day, a strange day, with big winds from the east, and hurrying white piles of clouds running before the wind; a day of premonitions and vague all-pervading warnings; a day of great noise and tumult in the air; a day of uneasiness and restless nervous excitement. Horses showed it in their unusual restiveness. The few people on the streets seemed to be walking with undue haste; those more highly strung particularly showed the effect of the atmospheric condition by their nervous glances at the heavens.

Half a mile away the pounding surf seemed to be the high-beating pulse of the day; while the skies between the white-winged clouds showed copper and purplish tints as of impending storm.

Janet quickening her steps down the long road toward the beach, felt acutely the strain on nerves and mind. She gazed almost with terror at the swaying tree-tops showing the silver on each leaf, and at the dust picked up and hurled away in clouds by the wind, along with bits of paper and dry leaves. She listened almost fearfully for the vague unheard warnings that filled the air — unheard, yet felt in every nerve in her body — blown in from horizons farther than ship ever sailed. And she heard the thunder of the breakers, an accom-

paniment she thought to the hurried beatings of her heart.

Rattle of hoofs on the macadam road answered the unspoken question in her mind.

Through the dust-clouds he came at headlong speed, ears back, eyes rolling white with terror, the light, empty runabout swaying from side to side at each leap. She had a fleeting glimpse of his white foam-flecked sides, the trailing reins, his distended nostrils red as fire; and then, fainter and fainter on her confused and ringing ears the rattling hoof-beats of the run-away.

"God!" she exclaimed, and hastened dizzily on into the wind.

A block from the beach she paused breathless with fresh terror; people running on the board-walk, cries and shouts, and a scream from a woman fainting in a flutter of assisting hands. And then, far and hoarse and distinct on the shoulders of the wind, the shocking, agonized cry for help — once, twice, three times — and her heart jumped and fluttered into a violent palpitation.

Through the immense crowd of now silent, curious people the girl picked her way, faint and dizzy, but impelled by some strange desire or fear; through to the little inmost circle of serious-faced men, with the doctors kneeling over the inert body of a man in a bathing suit; through that little circle and down on her knees beside the two doctors.

She was conscious of their pity at her cry, "Quick, the face," and then, as they gently turned the body over, while her heart seemed bursting, and the little circle swayed and swam before her dimming eyes, her elbow was seized violently from behind and she gazed over her shoulder into the black familiar face of a Hindoo, with gleaming teeth and black turban —

"You dream long and violently, I thought best to arouse you."

"The doctors said — Oh, God! the air! the air!"

* * * * *

Janet never told what the dream was. That her nervous system had been terribly shaken was evident. Harrison, much concerned, wisely gave up questioning her after the first few days.

"And it was really so bad, dear?" They were on the bridge again, being privileged. It was their last day at sea.

"It was horrible, Harrison, perfectly horrible!" Janet looked at him sadly, her face pale and drawn. Harrison noted the strange intensity of her look.

"I shall never tell you! You must stop questioning me about it! I want to get away from this ship, away from the nearness of the thing, out somewhere in the quiet country where I can think, and compose myself again."

Harrison held himself solely to blame. To Captain Anderson's anxious and self-reproachful queries he answered accordingly. On their arrival in Liverpool he rushed Janet away into the peace and quiet of old England, there to forget and cease her brooding once and for all. During the weeks that followed he exerted upon her all the strength of his pleasant personality. And Janet improved spiritually and physically day by day, week by week, until she could with safety look back on her experience, could even allow herself to wonder and marvel at its strangeness and vividness.

Lapse of time and change of scene are powerful aids in softening and dimming disagreeable memories. For several months Harrison and his wife traveled leisurely on the Continent. Janet was now in the best of health and spirits. The dream no longer worried and upset her to any great extent. It had assumed in her mind the proportions of a thing apart from all her life, to be called forth only in her deepest and most pensive moods. Whether she believed in it or not was a question she never allowed herself to consider. Meanwhile, Harrison, happy in Janet's happiness, and frequently occupied with his business interests, had completely forgotten the experience.

It was early spring when pressure of his affairs finally recalled him to New York. Janet wanted to wait for the *Liverpool* and Captain Anderson, but lack of time compelled them to return by a faster steamer. The ensuing months were busy ones indeed. Janet, impractical, only knew that some great railroad had been taken over and that Harrison's presence was required constantly at the office in the reorganization that followed.

When summer came they found it expedient to remain within easy reach of town instead of making their customary ocean voyage. So they selected Long Point on the Atlantic Coast, and

took a comfortable cottage there. Janet soon grew to love the place intensely. It was on a narrow strip of beautiful country some seventy miles from New York. Eastward, a block from their house, lay the broad expanse of the Atlantic, while the blue waters of the Bay were within easy reach on the western side. Harrison came down from town as often as he could. He found the roads excellent for his car, and the Bay well suited to his forty-foot *Wanderer*. Janet had a wide acquaintance in the summer colony and time hung lightly on her hands.

The sea in its varying moods charmed and enchanted her. She passed many happy days lost in the dazzle of sun and sand. She bathed much when Harrison was away. He cared more for the Bay, or to drive his car over the splendid roads of the surrounding country. It was a glorious summer and Janet basked and dreamed in a very ecstasy of happiness. The dream was stored away in some recess of her mind, to be reviewed and considered only at long intervals. It no longer caused her any anxiety, it had almost ceased to thrill her. True, that road from the station to the beach at Long Point might well have been the road of her dream, but she had seen other roads as similar.

One afternoon in late July Janet padded along the wet sand in her bathing suit. It was a somewhat threatening day, with a strong easterly wind, and uneasy surf. A certain melancholy mood had come upon her as it often did before an impending storm. She sat down suddenly and let the wash of the breakers touch her. Harrison would not be down until late that night she remembered. Something in the day perhaps had recalled again the dream to her mind. She felt the tenseness of the atmosphere, as though she were on the verge of something tremendous and terrible. She saw the fast clouding and copper-colored sky, and the darkening ocean white-capped to the horizon. It looked infinitely dangerous. The rising tide rushed against her strongly. The dream came back to her with more and more vividness. She was glad Harrison was in New York.

* * * * *

It was terrifically hot in the city. Blazing sun on burning, dirty streets, sweltering cars, and the discordant city noises all

combined to wilt and wear down any philosophical spirits who tried to ignore the weather. Harrison passed a horrible and useless morning at the office. He could not get down to any real business. He fumed and fussed, he was irritable, restless, unreasonable. At one o'clock he gave it up and went to the club.

Thoughts of Janet had been cropping up in his mind all morning; had helped to baffle his efforts at concentration on business. Time after time he caught himself back on board the *Liverpool* on that disagreeable adventure with the fortune-teller. It was strange, he thought, that she should never tell the dream she had there. And what a wreck it made of her for a few weeks! Strange indeed. He should talk to her about it now, find out what it was. Perhaps she still felt that terrible fear of what it was or might be. Harrison wondered vaguely why he had never pushed his investigations further. Janet would think it was rather late in the day, now. Well, he had to admit that he had not given it much thought for many months. He wondered at the insistence of the memory. Why should it come now, so much more serious than he had ever considered it before? Why should he be worried and upset this way on such a day, the most unbearable he had spent in town?

He summoned a waiter. "William, telephone Mr. Cartwright that I'll not play golf with him this afternoon. Say I've been called to the shore. Order me a cab in twenty minutes."

He subsided into his chair. Janet would laugh if she knew why he was changing all his plans, and rushing down to Long Point on the 2.30 train. Well, she should never know. He would say that he could not stand the heat in the city another instant. That was true.

He ordered brandy to ease his mind of its whirling thoughts. In induced composure he went carefully over the case. Why did this thing spring up from the past to so startle him, to so discompose him, to finally overwhelm him completely? Why could he not shake his mind clear of its unknown terror? Why could he not convince himself it was heat? He glanced finally at the clock. Five minutes had passed since he ordered the cab.

* * * * *

The 2.30 train was nearly deserted as Harrison stumbled

through to the chair car. Two or three friends received no sign of recognition to their greetings in his blurred eye and vacant white face. He collapsed in a chair and started terrifically as his eyes rested on a turbaned Indian standing in the doorway.

"Sick, old man?" asked an acquaintance, hand on his shoulder. He nodded weakly. "Heat," he lied, and turned his head to the window.

The soothing drone of the train bored insistently into his tired brain. Lickety-lickety-lockety, over frogs and switches, through yards covered with traffic, freight, engines, coaches, and shining rails snaking in and out. Lickety-lickety-lickety-lickety, faster and faster. Cross-roads fled by with glimpses of waving hands and a waiting team or two. Once Harrison saw a plunging white horse flash by, a yard from his face. It struck some chord in his memory, that white, rearing horse. He tried vainly to call to mind the connection. He felt that the baffling half-memory was of an incident foreign to his own life.

Two hours later at Long Point station Harrison left the train. He was in a frenzy of haste and nervousness. He was doubting seriously and hopelessly his sanity, and he was oppressed by a fear of impending disaster beyond the limits of his conception. Fear of what? He did not know.

He dared not trust himself in a hack, but hurried off down the long road to the beach. To reach Janet was his all-consuming desire.

Great white clouds were hurrying in from the east. Between them Harrison caught glimpses of the ominous and copper-colored heavens. The reverberation of the distant surf was borne to his ears on the wind; and up the street whirled clouds of dust and leaves and bits of fluttering paper.

Again he had the sensation of remembering something that had never happened. There was some similarity in the day, the wind, the flying dust-clouds, to some elusive recollection.

Rattling hoof-beats struck in on his confused ears, and he stood petrified with horror as a wild-eyed white horse and empty lurching runabout thundered by in a whirling dust-cloud.

"The runaway!" he gasped, not knowing what he said, and hurried on.

People waving arms and running on the board-walk. People hurrying out of cottages and the hotels and streaming down the short block to the beach. The palpitations of his heart made him stop and gasp for breath. And clearly he saw a woman scream and faint amid a flurry of assisting men at the head of the street.

Piercing and repeated shrieks for help rang in his ears clear above the uproar and confusion. Three times it came, and he staggered back as from a blow.

Next instant, tearing off his coat, he was flying down the street running as he had never run before. He tore his way through the now silent crowd, driven on by over-powering impulse. Right through the inmost circle he burst, speechless, choking for breath.

"Janet!" he cried, and the doctors caught him as he fell on his knees beside the body.

Dizzy, he swayed from side to side between the two doctors; the circle of faces swam before his dimming eyes, and the thunder of his heart was bursting his ear-drums, when his elbow was seized violently from behind, and he looked over his shoulder into the black face of a Hindoo with gleam of teeth and somber turban.



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